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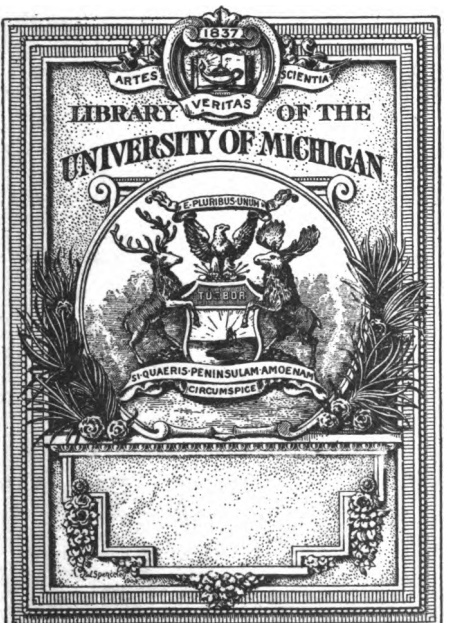
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VOLUME XXVI.—VIDOCQ.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT,
AVE-MARIA-LANE.

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MEMOIRS

OF

VIDOCQ,

PRINCIPAL AGENT OF THE FRENCH POLICE

UNTIL 1827;

AND NOW PROPRIETOR OF

THE PAPER MANUFACTORY AT ST. MANDÉ.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

"Que l'on m'approuve ou non, j'ai la conscience d'avoir fait mon devoir; d'ailleurs, lorsqu'il s'agit d'atteindre des scélérats qui sont en guerre ouverte avec la société, tous les moyens sont bons sauf la provocation."

MEMOIRES, VOL. II.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT,

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE

A receiver of stolen goods—Denouncement—First treaty with the police—Departure for Lyons—A mistake... 1

CHAPTER XVI.

Residence at Arras—Disguises—The false Austrian—Departure—Residence at Rouen—Arrest..... 11

CHAPTER XVII.

The camp at Boulogne—The rencontre—The recruiters of the ancien régime—M. Belle-Rose..... 23

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX.

PAGE

Continuation of the same day—The Cotemporaine—An adjutant de place—The daughters of mother Thomas—The Silver Lion—Captain Paulet and his lieutenant—The pirates—The bombardment—Departure of lord Lauderdale—The disguised actress—The executioner—Henry the Ninth and his ladies—I embark—Sea-fight—Paulet's second is killed—Capture of a brig of war—My Sosia—I change my name—Death of Dufailli—Twelfth day—A frigate sunk—I wish to save two lovers—A tempest—The fishermen's wives 74

CHAPTER XX.

I am admitted into the marine artillery—I become a corporal—Seven prisoners of war—Secret societies of the army, "The Olympiens"—Singular duels—Meeting with a galley-slave—The count de L——, a political spy—He disappears—The incendiary—I am promised promotion—I am betrayed—Once more in prison—Disbanding of the Armée de la Lune—The pardoned soldier—A companion is sentenced to be shot—The Piedmontese bandit—The camp fortune-teller—Four murderers set at liberty 81

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXI.

PAGE

I am conducted to Douai—Application for pardon—My wife marries again—The plunge in the Scarpe—I travel as an officer—Reading the despatches—Residence at Paris—A new name—The woman of my heart—I am a wandering merchant—The commissary of Melun—Execution of Herbaux—I denounce a robber; he denounces me—The galley-slaves at Auxerre—I am settled in the capital—Two fugitives from the bagne—My wife again—Receiving stolen goods..... 109

CHAPTER XXII.

Another robber—My wicker car—Arrest of two galley-slaves—Fearful discovery—St. Germain wishes to involve me in a robbery—I offer to serve the police—Horrid perplexities—They wish to take me whilst in bed—My concealment—A comic adventure—Disguises on disguises—Chevalier has denounced me—Annette at the Depot of the Prefecture—I prepare to leave Paris—Two passers of false money—I am apprehended in my shirt—I am conducted to the Bicêtre..... 127

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIII.

PAGE

A plan of escape—New proposal to M. Henry—My agreement with the police—Important discoveries—Coco-Lacour—A band of robbers—The inspectors under lock and key—The old clothes woman and the assassins—A pretended escape 147

CHAPTER XXIV.

M. Henry, surnamed the Evil Spirit—MM. Bertaux and Parisot—A word respecting the police—My first capture—Bouhin and Terrier are arrested upon my information 165

CHAPTER XXV.

I again meet St. Germain—He proposes to me the murder of two old men—The plunderers—The grandson of Cartouche—A short account of instigating agents—Great perplexities—Annette again aids me—An attempt to rob the house of a banker in the Rue Hauteville—I am killed—Arrest of St. Germain and his accomplice Boudin—Portraits of these two assassins 172

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVI.

PAGE

I continue to frequent places of bad resort—The inspectors betray me—Discovery of a receiver of stolen goods—I arrest him—Stratagem employed to convict him—He is condemned 188

CHAPTER XXVII.

Gueuvive's gang—A girl [illegible]me to discover the chief—I dine with the thie[illegible]ne of them takes me to sleep at his house—I pass for a fugitive galley-slave—I engage in a plot against myself—I wait for myself at my own door—A robbery in the Rue Cassette—Great surprise—Gueuvive with four of his men are arrested—The girl Cornevin points the others out to me—A batch of eighteen 194

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The agents of the police chosen from amongst liberated galley-slaves, thieves, bullies, and prostitutes—Theft tolerated—Degeneracy of the inspectors—Coalition of informers—They denounce me—Destruction of three classes of thieves—Formation of a new species—The brothers Delzève—How discovered—Delzève the younger arrested—The perquisites of a préfet of police—I free myself from the yoke of the peace officers and inspectors—My life is in danger—A few anecdotes... 20

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIX.

PAGE

I seek two celebrated thieves—The music mistress, or another "mother of robbers"—A metamorphosis, which is not the last—Scenes of hospitality—The false keys—Ramifications of an admirable plot—Perfidy of an agent—The plan detected—Mother Noel accuses me of having robbed her—My innocence recognised—My female accuser sent to St. Lazare 214

CHAPTER XXX.

The police-officers sent in pursuit of a celebrated robber—They are unable to discover him—Great anger of one of them—I promise another new-year's gift to the préfet—The yellow curtains and the hump-backed female—I am a good citizen—A messenger puts me on the right scent—The chest of the prefecture of police—I am a coal man—The fright of a vintner and his wife—The little Norman in tears—The danger of giving Eau-de-Cologne—Carrying off of mademoiselle Tonneau—A search—The thief takes me for his mate—Thieves laugh at locksmiths—The jump from the window—The effects of a long slide, or broken stitches 227

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CHAPTER XXXI.

PAGE

A general clearance at la Courtille—The white cross——I am called a spy—The popular opinion concerning my agents—Summary of the results of the Brigade de Sûreté—Biography of Coco-Lacour—M. Delevau and the Trou-Madame—The grant of my pardon—Retrospective glance over these Memoirs—I can speak, I will speak..... 244

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MEMOIRS OF VIDOCQ.

CHAPTER XV.

A receiver of stolen goods—Denouncement—First treaty with the Police—Departure for Lyons—A mistake.

After the dangers I had undergone whilst remaining with Roman and his band, some idea may be formed of the joy which I experienced on quitting them. It was evident that the government, once determinately settled, would adopt the most efficacious measures for ensuring the safety of the interior. The remains of the bands, which, under the name of "Chevaliers du Soleil, or the Compagnie de Jésus," owed their formation to a political reaction, deferred indefinitely, could not fail to be destroyed as soon as was desired. The only honest excuse for their brigandage—royalism—no longer existed; and although Hivèr, Leprêtre, Boulanger, Bastide, Jansein, and other "sons of the family," made a boast of attacking the couriers, because they found their profit in it, it began to be no longer in good taste to think that it was quite correct to appropriate to oneself the money of the state. All the *incroyables* who had thought it a service to check, pistol in hand, the circulation of despatches and the collection of the imposts, withdrew now to their fire-sides; and those who had profited by their exertions, or wished for other reasons to be forgotten, betook themselves to a distance from the scene of their exploits. In fact, order was re-established, and the time was at hand when robbers, whatever might be their pretext or mo-

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tive, were no longer to be tolerated. I should have been very desirous, under such circumstances, to have enrolled myself in a band of robbers, only, the infamy of such a procedure apart, I should have been kept from it by the certainty of being speedily brought to the scaffold. But another thought animated me; I wished to avoid, at any cost, the opportunities and means of committing crimes: I wished to be free. I knew not how this wish was to be realized, or did it matter; my determination was made, and I had, as they say, marked a cross on the prison. In haste to get at a considerable distance, I took the road to Lyons, avoiding the high roads, until I reached the environs of Orange; there I fell in with some Provençal waggoners, whose packages soon revealed to me that they were about to take the same road as myself. I entered into conversation with them; and as they appeared to me to be hearty jovial fellows, I did not hesitate to tell them that I was a deserter, and that they would serve me materially if, to aid me in avoiding the vigilance of the gendarmes, they would agree to bestow their patronage on me. This proposal did not surprise them, and it even seemed as if they had suspected that I should claim their protection and secresy. At this period, and particularly in the south, it was not rare to meet with fine fellows, who had left their colours and committed themselves to the care of heaven. It was then very natural to take my word; and the waggoners received me kindly; and some money which I displayed, as if by chance, completed the interest which I had already excited. It was agreed that I should pass for the son of the person who had these conveyances in charge. I was accordingly clothed with a smock-frock, and was supposed to be making my first journey. I was decorated with ribands and nosegays, emblems which at each public-house procured for me the congratulation of all the inmates.

A new "John of Paris," I filled my part very well; but the donations necessary to support it adequately

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made such inroads on my purse, that, on reaching the guillotiere, where I was to leave my party, I had only twenty-eight sous left. With resources so inefficient, I had no thoughts of fixing my abode at the hotels of the Place des Terreaux. Having wandered about for some time in the dirty and dark streets of the second city in France, I remarked, in the Rue des Quatre-Chapeaux, a sort of tavern where I thought that I might procure a supper commensurate with my finances. I was not mistaken; the supper was light enough, and soon despatched. To remain hungry is indeed a disagreeable thing; and not to know where to find shelter for one's head is equally annoying. When I had wiped my knife, which, however, had not been much engaged, I was reflecting that I must pass the night under the canopy of heaven, when, at a table near to mine, I heard a conversation in that bastard German so much spoken in some districts of the Netherlands, and with which I was well acquainted. The speakers were a man and woman about to retire, and whom I found to be Jews. Informed that at Lyons, as in many other towns, these people kept furnished houses, in which they received smugglers, I asked if they could direct me to a public-house. I could not have addressed myself to better persons; for they were lodging-keepers, and offered to become my hosts, which, on agreeing to, I accompanied them to the Rue Thomassin. Six beds were in the room in which I was placed, none of which were occupied, although it was ten o'clock, and I fell asleep under the idea that I should have no companions in my room.

On awaking, I heard the following conversation in a slang language which was familiar to me.

"It is half past six," said a voice, which was not unknown to me, "and you lie snoring still."

"Well, and what then? We wanted to break open the old goldsmith's shop to night, but he was on his guard, and we ought to have given him a few inches of cold steel, and then the blood would have flowed."

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"Ah ha! but you fear the guillotine too much. But that is not the way to go to work to get the money."

"I would rather murder on the highway, than break open shops; the gendarmes are always at your heels."

"Well, then, you have got no booty; and yet there were snuff-boxes, watches, and gold chains enough. The Jew will have no business to day."

"No; the false key broke in the lock, the citizen cried for help, and we had to run for it. . . ."

"Holla!" said a third person; "do not wag your tongue so fast; there is a man in bed, who may be listening."

The advice was too late, but it silenced them, and I half-opened my eyes to see the faces of my companions; but my bed being very low, I could not perceive them. I remained quiet, that they might suppose me asleep; when one of the speakers having arisen, I recognised him as an escaped prisoner from Toulon, named Neveu, who had left some days before me. His comrade jumped out of bed, and him I knew to be Cadet-Paul, another fugitive; a third, and then a fourth arose, and I knew them all then to be galley-slaves.

I almost fancied myself in my room, No. 3. At length I got up from my bed, and scarcely had I put foot on the floor, when they all exclaimed "'Tis Vidocq!" They surrounded and congratulated me. One of the robbers, Charles Deschamps, who had escaped a few days after me, told me, that the whole Bagne were full of admiration at my boldness and success. Nine o'clock having struck, they conducted me to breakfast, where we joined the brothers Quinét, Bonnefoi, Robineau, Metral, and Lemat, names well known in the south. They overwhelmed me with kindnesses, procured me money, clothes, and even a mistress.

I was here situated precisely as I had been at Nantes, but I was not more desirous of following the profession of my friends than I had been in Bretagne;

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but until I had a remittance from my mother I must live somehow. I thought I might manage to support myself for a time without labour. I proposed most determinately only to receive subsistence from the robbers; but man proposes and God disposes. The fugitives, discontented that I, under various pretexts, always avoided joining their daily plundering parties, at once denounced me, to get rid of a troublesome witness, who might become dangerous. They imagined that I should escape, as a matter of course, and relied, that once known by the police, and having no refuge but with their band, I should then unite myself to their party. In this circumstance, as in all others of a similar kind, in which I have been found, if they were so desirous of my companionship, it was because they had a high opinion of my penetration, my adroitness, and particularly of my strength,—a valuable quality in a profession in which profit is too often attained by peril.

Arrested at Adele Buffin's, in the passage Saint Come, I was taken to the prison of Roanne, where I learnt from my examination that I had been sold. In the rage which this discovery threw me into, I took a sudden step, which was in a measure my introduction to a career entirely new to me. I wrote to M. Dubois, commissary-general of the police, requesting a private interview, and the same evening I was conducted to his private closet. Having explained my situation to him, I offered to put him in the way of seizing the brothers Quinét, then pursued for having assassinated the wife of a mason of the Rue Belle-Cordaire. I proposed besides to point out the means of apprehending all the persons, lodging as well at the Jew's as at Caffin's, the joiner's, in the Rue Ecorche-Bœuf. In return, I only asked for liberty to quit Lyons. M. Dubois had doubtless been before the dupe of such proposals, and I saw that he hesitated to trust me. "You doubt my word," said I to him: "should you still suspect me if I should escape on my way back

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to prison, and return and surrender myself as your prisoner?" — "No," he replied. "Well, then, you shall soon see me again, provided that you consent not to give my guards any additional orders for my security." He agreed, and I went away; but on arriving at the corner of the Rue de la Lanterne, I knocked down the two tipstaffs, who had each an arm of mine, and regained the Hotel de Ville with all possible speed, where I found M. Dubois, who was greatly surprised at my prompt re-appearance; but certain from that that he might rely on me, I was allowed to go at liberty.

The next day I saw the Jew, whose name was Vidal, who directed me to a house in the Rue Croix Rousse, where, he said, my friends had gone to live, and thither I went. They knew of my escape; but as they had no idea of my understanding with the commissary-general of police, and did not think that I knew who had directed the blow which struck me, they gave me a very cordial reception. During the conversation, I gathered details from the brothers Quinét, which I transmitted to M. Dubois the same evening, and who, convinced of my sincerity, reported my conduct to M. Ganier, secretary-general of the police, and now commissary at Paris. I gave this gentleman all necessary information, and must say that he acted on his part with much tact and activity.

Two days before they commenced operations, as I had advised, on Vidal's house, I thought it expedient that I should be again arrested. I was again conducted to the prison of Roanne, where the next day Vidal, Coffin, Neveu, Cadet-Paul, Deschamps, and many others, whom they had caught in the same snare, were brought in. I was at first kept from communicating with them, because I had thought it best that I should be put "au secret." When I was released from it, at the end of several days, to join the other prisoners, I pretended much surprise at finding all the party there; none appeared to have the least

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idea of the part which I had played. Neveu alone regarded me with distrust; and on my demanding the cause, he said, that by the way in which they had been pursued and interrogated, he could not help suspecting that I was the denouncer. I feigned much indignation, and fearing that this opinion might be disseminated, I assembled the prisoners, and informing them of Neveu's suspicions, I demanded if they thought me capable of selling my comrades? and on their answering in the negative, Neveu was compelled to apologize to me. It was important to me that these suspicions should be thus destroyed; for I knew that certain death would be my doom if they had been confirmed. There had been many instances at Roanne of this distributive justice, which the prisoners exercised towards one another. One named Moissel, suspected of having given information relative to a robbery of church plate, had been knocked on the head in the court, without the assassin being detected. More recently, another individual, accused of a similar indiscretion, had been found one morning hung with a straw band at the bars of his window, and the perpetrator was never discovered.

In the mean time M. Dubois sent for me to his closet, where, to avoid suspicion, the other prisoners were conducted with me, as if about to undergo an examination. I entered first, and the commissary-general told me that many very expert robbers had arrived at Lyons from Paris, and the more dangerous, as, being supplied with regular credentials, they might wait in safety for the opportunity of making some decided stroke, and then immediately go away: their names were Jaillier, called Boubanec, Bouthey, called Cadet, Buchard, Garard, Mollin, called the Chapellier, Marquis, called Main d'Or, and some others less notorious. These names, by which they were mentioned, were then entirely new to me; and I told M. Dubois so, adding, that possibly they might be false. He wished to release me immediately, that by seeing these individuals in some public place, I might

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assure myself whether I had ever seen them before; but I observed to him, that so abrupt a liberation would certainly compromise me with the prisoners, in case that the good of the service should require me again to be entered as prisoner on the jailor's books. The reflection appeared just; and it was agreed that they should devise a means of sending me away the next day without incurring suspicion.

Neveu, who was amongst the prisoners, was also examined after me in the commissary's closet. After some minutes he came out in a rage, and I asked him what had happened.

"What do you think?" said he, "the old covey wanted me to turn nose on the cracksmen who have just arrived. If they find no one to blow them but me they are all right."

"Why, I did not think you such a flat," said I, the idea flashing on my mind, that I might turn this to advantage; "I have promised to blow the gang, and ensure them a lodging in the stone jug."

"What! you turned nose? Besides, you are not fly to the gang."

"What matters that? I shall get out of quod, and show them my heels, whilst you are still clinking the darbies."

Neveu appeared struck with the idea, and expressed much regret for having refused the offers of the commissary-general; and as I could not get rid of him, I begged him to return to M. Dubois and recall his refusal. He agreed; and as I had arranged, we were one evening conducted to the great theatre; then to the Celestins, where Neveu pointed out to me all the men. We then retired, escorted by the police agents, who kept close upon us. For the success of my plan, and to avoid suspicion, it was expedient to make the attempt to escape, which would at least confirm the hope which I had given to my companion, and I told him of my intention. On passing Rue Merciere, we entered abruptly into a passage and closed the door; and whilst the officers ran to the other end, we went

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out quietly by the way we had entered. When they returned, ashamed of their stupidity, we were already at a considerable distance.

Two days afterwards, Neveu, who was no longer wanted, and could not suspect me, was again arrested. I, knowing then the robbers whom we wanted, pointed them out to the police-officers in the church of Saint Nizier, where they had one Sunday assembled, in the hope of making a good booty on the termination of the prayers. Being no longer useful to the authorities, I then quitted Lyons to go to Paris, where, thanks to M. Dubois, I was sure of arriving in safety.

I set out on the Burgundy road by the diligence, which then only travelled by day. At Lucy-le-Bois, where I slept with the other travellers, I was forgotten; and on waking, learnt that the vehicle had been gone two hours. I trusted to overtake it, in consequence of the ruggedness of the road, which is very steep in these districts; but on reaching Saint Brice, I was convinced that it was too much in advance to allow of my overtaking it, and I accordingly slackened my pace. A person who was travelling in the same direction, seeing me in a great heat, looked attentively at me, and asked me if I had come from Lucy-le-Bois; and on my replying in the affirmative, our conversation rested there. This man stopped at Saint Brice, whilst I pushed on to Auxerre. Spent with fatigue, I entered an inn, where, after having dined, I desired to be conducted to a bed.

I slept for several hours, when I was awakened by a great noise at my door, at which some persons were knocking violently. I got up, half dressed, and my eyes, heavy from sleep, gazed, as I opened the door, on tri-coloured scarves, yellow trousers, and red facings. It was the commissary of police, attended by the quarter-master and two gendarmes, a sight which I could not see without some emotion. "See how pale he turns," said one of them; "it is he." I raised my eyes, and recognised the man who had spoken to me at Saint Brice; but nothing explained to me as yet the motive of this sudden invasion.

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"Let us proceed methodically," said the commissary; "five feet five inches, (French measure) that is right; brown hair—eye-brows and beard, idem—common forehead—grey eyes—prominent nose—good sized mouth—round chin—full face—good colour—tolerably stout."

"It is he," said the quarter-master, the two gendarmes, and the man of Saint Brice.

"Yes, it is indeed," said the commissary in his turn. "Blue surtout — trousers of grey casimere — white waistcoat—black cravat."

This was my dress, certainly.

"Well, did I not say so?" said the officious guide of the police: "he is one of the robbers!"

The description tallied exactly with mine. But I had stolen nothing; and yet in my situation I could experience all the disquiets of having done so. Perhaps it was a mistake; perhaps also....The party were transported with joy. "Peace!" said the commissary; and turning over the leaf, he continued, "We shall easily recognise his Italian accent. He has besides the thumb of the right hand injured by a shot." I spoke, and showed my right hand, which was in a perfectly sound state. All the party stared; and particularly the man of Saint Brice, who appeared singularly disconcerted: as for me, I felt relieved of an enormous weight. The commissary, whom I questioned in my turn, told me, that on the preceding night a considerable robbery had been committed at Saint Brice. One of the suspected individuals wore clothes similar to mine, and there was a similarity of description. It was to this combination of circumstances, to this strange sport of fortune, that I was indebted for the disagreeable visit which I received. They made excuses, which I accepted with a good grace, very happy at getting off so well; but yet, in the fear of some new catastrophe, I put myself the same evening into a packet-boat, which conveyed me to Paris, whence I started immediately for Arras.

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CHAPTER XVI.

Residence at Arras—Disguises—The false Austrian—Departure—Residence at Rouen—Arrest.

MANY reasons, which may be divined, did not allow of my proceeding at once to my paternal abode; and, alighting at the house of one of my aunts, I learnt the death of my father, which sad intelligence was soon confirmed by my mother, who received me with a tenderness widely contrasting with the treatment I had experienced during the two years of my absence. She was extremely anxious to keep me with her; but it was absolutely necessary that I should be constantly concealed, and I did not leave the house for three months. At the end of that time my confinement began to weary me, and I went out, sometimes under one disguise and sometimes under another. I thought I had not been recognised, when suddenly a report spread through the town that I was there, and the police began to search for me, making constant visits to my mother, without, however, discovering the place of my concealment, which was not very large, being only ten feet long and six wide; but I had so well contrived it, that a person, who afterwards purchased the house, lived in it nearly four years without suspecting the existence of this place, and would probably never have known it had I not revealed it to him.

Secure in my retreat, out of which I thought it would be difficult to surprise me, I soon took fresh excursions. One day, on Shrove Tuesday, I even carried my daring to such an extent as to appear at a ball, in the midst of upwards of two hundred persons. I was dressed as a marquis; and a female, with whom I had been on intimate terms, having recognised me,

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told another, who thought that she had a cause of complaint against me; so that in less than a quarter of an hour everybody knew under what disguise Vidocq was concealed. The report reached the ears of two police serjeants, Delrue and Carpentier, who were on duty at the ball; and the former, coming up to me, said in a low voice that he wished to speak with me in private: a refusal would have been dangerous, and I followed him into the court, where Delrue asked my name. I did not hesitate to give him a false one; and proposed politely that he should untie my mask if he doubted me. "I do not require that," said he, "but I shall not object to look at you." "Well then, untie my mask, which has got entangled with my hair." Full of certainty, Delrue went behind me, and at that instant I upset him with a forcible motion of my body backwards, and with a blow of my fist I sent his satellite rolling beside him on the earth. Without waiting until they arose, I fled with the utmost speed in the direction of the ramparts, relying on being able to climb over them, and get into the country: but scarcely had I run many paces, when I found myself in an alley which had been blocked up at one end since I had quitted Arras.

Whilst I was thus wandering out of my way, a noise of iron heels announced that the two serjeants were at hand; and I soon saw them approach me, sword in hand. I was unarmed; and seizing the large house key, as if it had been a pistol, I presented it at them, and compelled them to make way for me. "Pass quietly, François," said Carpentier, with a tremulous voice, "do not play any nonsense with us." I did not want to be told a second time, and in a few minutes reached my retreat.

This adventure was noised about, and in spite of the efforts which the two serjeants made to conceal it, they were laughed at by everybody. What was most annoying to me was, that the authorities redoubled their vigilance, so that it was almost impos-

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sible for me to go out. I remained thus immured for two months, which to me seemed as many centuries. Being no longer able to endure it, I resolved on quitting Arras, and they made me up a pack of lace; and one fine night, provided with a passport, which Blondel, one of my friends, had lent to me, I set out. The description did not answer; but for want of a better, I was compelled to put up with that; and, in fact, no objection was made to me on my route.

I reached Paris. Whilst engaged in disposing of my commodities, I made indirectly some steps towards finding out if it were not possible to obtain some reversal of my sentence. I learnt that I must, in the first instance, give myself up as a prisoner, but I could never resolve on again mixing with the wretches whom I knew so well. It was not the confinement that I dreaded; I would willingly have submitted to have been enclosed alone between four walls; and what proves this is, that I then requested leave from the minister to finish the term of my sentence in the madhouse at Arras; but my application remained unanswered.

My lace was sold, but with so little profit that I could not think of turning to this trade as a mode of life. A travelling clerk, who lived in the Rue Saint Martin, in the same hotel as I did, and to whom I partly stated my situation, proposed that I should enter the service of a seller of finery, who visited the fairs. I procured the situation, but only kept it for ten months, as we had some disagreements which determined me again to return to Arras. I was not long in returning to my nightly excursions. In the house of a young person to whom I paid some attentions, I frequently met the daughter of a gendarme, and endeavoured to learn from her all that was plotting against me. The girl did not know me; but as in Arras I was the constant subject of conversation, it was not extraordinary to hear her speak of me, and frequently in singular terms. "Oh," said she to me

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one day, "we shall soon catch that vagabond; there is our lieutenant (M. Dumortier, now commissary of police at Abbeville) who wants him too much not to catch him soon; I would bet that he would give a day's pay to get hold of him."

"If I were your lieutenant, and wanted to take Vidocq," replied I, "I would contrive that he should not escape me."

"You! Oh yes, you and everybody! He is always completely armed. You know they said that he fired twice at Delrue and Carpentier; and that is not all, for he can change himself into a bundle of hay whenever he likes."

"A bundle of hay!" cried I, surprised at the novel endowment assigned to me—"A bundle of hay! How?"

"Yes, sir; my father pursued him one day, and at the moment he laid his hand upon his collar, he found that he only held a handful of hay. He did not only say it, but all the brigade saw the bundle of hay, which was burnt in the barrack-yard."

I could not make out this history; but learnt afterwards that the police officers, not being able to lay hold of me, had given circulation to this tale amongst the credulous citizens of Arras. With the same motive they obligingly insinuated that I was the double of a certain loup-garou, whose wonderful appearances froze with fear the superstitious inhabitants of the country. Fortunately, these terrors were not shared by some pretty women, whom I had interested in my favour; and if the demon of jealousy had not suddenly seized on one of the number, the authorities would not perhaps have given themselves so much trouble about me. In her anger she was indiscreet; and the police, who did not clearly know what had become of me, again learnt that I was certainly in Arras.

One evening as, without mistrust and only armed with a stick, I was returning through the Rue d'Amiens, on crossing the bridge at the end of the Rue des

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Goquets, I was attacked by seven or eight individuals. They were constables disguised; and, seizing my garments, were already assured of their prize, when, freeing myself by a powerful jerk, I leapt the parapet, and threw myself into the river. It was in December; the tide was high, the current rapid, and none of the police-men had any inclination to follow me: they thought besides, that by waiting for me on the bank I should not escape them; but a sewer that I found enabled me to deceive them, and they were still waiting for me when I was at my mother's house.

Every day I experienced fresh dangers, and every day the most pressing necessity suggested new expedients for my preservation. However, at length, according to my custom, I grew weary of a liberty which the compulsion of concealment rendered illusory. Some nuns of the Rue —— had for some time harboured me; but I resolved on quitting their hospitable roof, and turned over in my mind the means of appearing in public without inconvenience. Some thousands of Austrian prisoners were then in the citadel, whence they went out to work with the citizens, or in the neighbouring villages, and the idea occurred to me, that the presence of these strangers might be useful to me. As I spoke German, I entered into conversation with one of them, and inspired him with sufficient confidence to confide to me his intention of escaping. This project was favourable to my views; the prisoner was embarrassed with his Kaiserlik uniform, and I offered to exchange it for mine; and for some money which I gave him to boot, he was glad to let me have his papers also. From this moment I was an Austrian, even in the eyes of the Austrians themselves, who, belonging to different corps, did not know all their body.

Under this new disguise, I joined a young widow, who had a mercery establishment in the Rue de ——: she found that I had ability, and wished that I would instal myself at her house; and we soon visited the

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fairs and markets together. It was evident that I could not aid her, unless I could understand the buyers, and I formed gibberish, half Teutonic, half French, which they understood wonderfully well, and which became so familiar to me, that I insensibly forgot that I knew any other language. Besides, the illusion was so complete, that after cohabiting together for four months, the widow did not suspect any more than the rest of the world, that the soi-disant Kaiserlik was one of the friends of her childhood. However, she treated me so well, that it was impossible to deceive her any longer; and one day I told her who I really was, and never was woman more astonished. But, far from its injuring me in her estimation, the confidence in some sort only made our intimacy the closer; so much are women generally smitten by any thing that bears the appearance of mystery or adventure! And then, are they not always delighted with the acquaintance of a wicked fellow? Who, better than myself, can know how often they are the providence of fugitive galley-slaves and condemned prisoners?

Eleven months glided away, and nothing occurred to disturb my repose. The frequency of my being in the streets, my constant meetings with the police-officers, who had not even paid attention to me, all seemed to augur the duration of this tranquillity, when, one day as we were sitting down to dinner in the back shop, the faces of three gendarmes were visible through a glass door. I was just helping the soup; the spoon fell from my hands; but recovering soon from the stupor into which this unlooked-for visit had thrown me, I darted towards the door, which I bolted, and then jumping out of the window, I got into a loft, whence I gained the roof of the next house, and running down the staircase which led into the street, I found, on reaching the door, two gendarmes. Fortunately, they were but novices, who did not know me: "Go up," said I to them, "the brigadier has got him, but he resists; go up, and lend your aid, whilst I run

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for the guard." The two gendarmes ascended quickly, and I made off."

It was plain that I had been sold to the police. My friend was incapable of such a black deed, but she had, without doubt, been guilty of some indiscretion. Now that the cry was raised against me, ought I to tarry longer at Arras? It would be in vain to say, that I would always remain in my place of concealment; I could not reconcile myself to a life so wretched, and I determined on quitting the city. My little lady mercer insisted on accompanying me; she had means of conveyance; her commodities were soon packed, and we set out together, and, as usually happens in such cases, the police was informed last of the disappearance of a female, whose measures they ought not to have been in ignorance of. According to some old notions, they imagined that we should go towards Belgium, as if Belgium had still been the country of refuge; and whilst they were pursuing us in the direction of the old frontier, we were quietly progressing towards Normandy, by cross roads, which my companion had obtained a knowledge of in her mercantile journies.

It was at Rouen that we had made up our minds to fix our abode. Arrived in this city, I had with me the passport of Blondel, which I had procured at Arras: the description which it gave was so different from mine, that it was indispensably necessary to make myself a little more like it.

To achieve this, it was necessary to deceive the police, now become the more vigilant and inquisitive, as the communications of the emigrants in England were made through the Normandy coast. Thus did I contrive it. I went to the town-hall, where I had my passport *visé* for Havre. A *visa* was obtained without difficulty; it was sufficient that the passport was not entirely contradictory, and mine was not so. The formality gone through, I departed, and two minutes afterwards I entered the office, and asked if any person had found a pocket-book. No one could give me any

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tidings of it, and then I was in despair; pressing business called me to Havre, and I wanted to start that very evening, but what was to be done without a passport?

"Is it only that?" said a clerk. "With the register of the *visa* you can get a duplicate passport." This was what I needed; the name of Blondel was kept, but this time, at least, my description was correctly given. To complete the effect of my stratagem, not only did I set out for Havre, but I advertised my pocket-book by little bills stuck about, although it had only passed from my hands to that of my companion.

By means of this little bit of good management, my reinstatement was complete; and, provided with fitting credentials, I had only to lead an honest life, and I actually began to think of it; and took, in Rue Mortainville, a repository for mercery and bonnets, in which we did so well, that my mother, whom I had informed secretly of my success, determined on coming to join us. For a year I was really happy; my business increased, my connections extended, my credit was established, and more than one banking-house in Rouen may perhaps remember when the signature of Blondel was well respected in the place. At length, after so many storms, I thought I had reached port; when an incident, which I had never contemplated, involved me in a fresh series of vicissitudes. The lady mercer with whom I lived, this woman who had given me the strongest proofs of devotion and love, began to burn with other fires than those which I had kindled in her heart. I was desirous of persuading myself that she was not unfaithful, but the fault was so flagrant that the offender had not even the resource of those well-supported denials which enable the convenient husband to persuade himself that he is not wronged. At another time, I would not have submitted to such an affront without putting myself into a transport of rage, but how time had changed me! Witness of my misfortune, I coldly signified my deter

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mination to separate; prayers, supplications, nothing could bend me; I was immutable. I might have pardoned her, it is true, if only out of gratitude: but who would convince me that she who had befriended me would break off with my rival? And might I not have cause to fear, that, in a moment of tenderness, she would compromise my safety by some disclosure? We then divided our stock of goods, and my companion quitting me, I never heard of her after.

Disgusted with my residence at Rouen, through this adventure, I took to my old trade of travelling merchant; my journies comprised the circuit of Nante, Saint Germain, and Versailles, where, in a short time, I formed an excellent connection; my profits became sufficiently considerable to allow of my renting at Versailles, in the Rue de la Fontaine, a warehouse, with a small apartment, which my mother inhabited during my journies. My conduct was then free from any stigma; I was generally esteemed in the circle which I had formed; and again I hoped that I had overcome the fatality which so often cast me into the path of dishonour, whence all my efforts were now used to free myself, when, denounced by an early friend, who thus revenged himself for some disagreement we had once had together, I was arrested on my return from the fair of Nantes. Although I obstinately asserted that I was not Vidocq, but Blondel, as my passport proved, I was sent to St. Denis, whence I was to be sent to Douai. By the extraordinary care taken to prevent my escape, I perceived that I was recommended; and a glance which I threw over the book of the gendarmerie, revealed to me a precaution of a very particular nature. I was thus designated—

"SPECIAL SURVEILLANCE.

"VIDOCQ (Eugene François), *condemned to death for non-appearance.* This man is exceedingly enterprising and dangerous."

Thus, to keep the vigilance of my guards on the alert, I was described as a great criminal. I set out

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to St. Denis in a car, pinioned, so that I could not move, and to Louvres the escort never took eyes off me. These arrangements announced the rigours in store for me, and I roused all the energy that had already so often procured me my liberty.

We had been put into the clock-house of Louvres, now transformed into a prison, where they brought us two mattresses, a counterpane, and sheets, which, cut and fastened together, would help us to descend into the church-yard. A bar was cut with the knives of three deserters confined with us, and at two o'clock in the morning I made the first attempt, and having reached the extremity of the rope, I perceived that it was nearly fifteen feet from the ground; hesitation availed nought, and I let go, but, as in my fall at the ramparts at Lille, I sprained my left leg so severely, that I could scarcely walk; however, I attempted to climb the walls of the churchyard, when I heard the key turn quietly in the lock. It was the jailor and his dog, who had noses alike for following a scent: the jailor, at first, passed beneath the cord without seeing it; and the mastiff near a ditch in which I lay, without smelling me. Having gone the round, they retired, and I thought that my companions would follow my example; but no one appearing, I climbed the wall and got into the plain. The pain of my foot became more and more acute, but I bore the pain, and courage giving me strength, I made considerable progress. I had nearly advanced a quarter of a league, when I suddenly heard the sound of the tocsin. It was in the middle of May. At the earliest dawn, I saw several armed peasants go out of their dwellings and spread themselves over the plains. They were probably ignorant of what was the cause of disturbance, but my sore leg was a token that might make me suspected. My face was unknown: in all probability, the first persons who met me would secure my person. Had I been in full possession of my limbs, I could have distanced all pursuit; I must yield at present; and scarcely had I got on two hundred paces, when, overtaken by the gen-

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darmes who were scouring the country, I was seized and conveyed back to the cursed clock-house.

The unpropitious result of this attempt did not discourage me. At Bapaume we were placed in the citadel, an old police station, guarded by a detachment of conscripts of the 30th regiment of the line; one sentinel only was placed over us, and he was under the window, and near enough for me to enter into conversation with him, which I did. The soldier, to whom I addressed myself, appeared a good fellow enough, and I thought I could easily bribe him. I offered him fifty francs to let us escape whilst he was on guard. He refused at first; but by the tone of his voice, and by a certain twinkling of his eyes, I thought I saw his impatience to get such a sum, only that he was afraid of consequences. To encourage him, I increased the dose, and showed him three louis, when he said he would aid us; at the same time adding, that his round would be from midnight till two o'clock. Having made our arrangements, I commenced operations; the wall was pierced so as to allow us a free egress, and we only waited until the opportunity should arrive. At length, midnight struck; the soldier announced to me that he was there, and I gave him the three louis, and made the necessary dispositions. When all was ready, I called out. "Is it time?" I said to the sentinel. "Yes, make haste," he answered, after a trifling hesitation. I thought it singular that he did not answer instantly, and imagining that his conduct was somewhat dubious, I listened. He seemed to be marching; and, by the moonlight, I also perceived the shadow of several men in the ditch, and had no longer any doubt but that we were betrayed. However, as I might have been mistaken, to make quite sure, I took some straw, which I stuffed into some clothes, and put it at the aperture which we had made; and at the same instant, a sabre blow that would have cleft an anvil, informed me that I had well escaped, and confirmed me more and more in the opinion, that we must not always trust to conscripts. The prison was soon filled

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with gendarmes, who drew up a statement of facts: they examined us, wishing to know all, and I declared that I had given the conscript three louis, which he denied; he was examined, and on their being found in his shoes, he was put in the black-hole.

As for us, we were threatened most menacingly; but as they could not punish us, they contented themselves with doubling the guard. There was now no method of escape, without one of those opportunities for which I watched incessantly, and which presented itself earlier than I expected. The next day was the day of our departure, and we had descended into the barrack-yard, which was in great confusion from the arrival of a fresh number of prisoners and a detachment of conscripts from Ardennes, who were going to the camp at Boulogne. The adjutants were squabbling with the gendarmes about room for forming three divisions, and making the muster-call. While each were counting their men, I glided cautiously in at the tail of a baggage-waggon just leaving the court, and thus passed through the city, motionless, and in as small a compass as possible, to elude detection. Once beyond the ramparts, I had only to steal away; and I seized the opportunity whilst the waggoner, thirsty, as these people always are, had gone into an ale-house to refresh himself; and whilst his horses awaited him on the road, I lightened his conveyance of a load, of which he was not aware. I slept in a field of maize, and when night arrived, directed my steps eastward.

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CHAPTER XVII.

The camp at Boulogne—The rencontre—The recruiters of the ancien régime—M. Belle-Rose.

I TRAVELLED through Picardy towards Boulogne. At this period, Napoleon had abandoned his intention of a descent on England, and was about to make war against Austria with his vast army, but had left many battalions on the shores of the British channel. There were in the two camps, that on the left and that on the right, depots of almost every corps, and soldiers of every nation in Europe; Italians, Germans, Piedmontese, Dutch, Swiss, and even Irish.

The uniforms were various, and this variety might be useful in concealing me; but I thought that it would be bad policy to disguise myself by only borrowing a military garb. I thought for a moment of becoming actually a soldier, but then to enter a regiment it would have been necessary to have certain papers, which I had not. I then gave up the intention, and yet my abode at Boulogne was dangerous, until I should decide on something.

One day that I was more embarrassed and more unquiet than usual, I met on the walks a serjeant of marine-artillery, whom I had met at Paris, and who was, as well as myself, a native of Arras; but having embarked when very young in a ship of war, he had passed the greater portion of his life in the colonies, and on his return to his native country had learnt nothing of my doings. He only looked on me as a bon vivant; and a public-house row, in which I energetically espoused his cause, had given him a high opinion of my courage.

"What, is it you?" said he, "Roger Bontemps; and what are you doing at Boulogne?" "What am I

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doing! why, seeking employment in the train of the army." "Oh, you want employment; do you know that it is devilish difficult to get a berth now? But, if you will listen to my advice—though this is not the place for such conversation; let us go to Galand's."

We then went to a sort of sutler's booth, which was modestly stationed in one of the angles of the street. "Ah! good day, Parisian," said the serjeant to the host. "Good day, father Dufailli—What will you have this morning?—a dram?—mixed or plain." "Five-and-twenty gods! papa Galand, do you take us for blackguards? It is the best pullet and super-excellent wine that we want, do you hear?" Then addressing me,—'Is it not true, old boy, that the friends of our friends are our friends? That you must agree to;" and, taking my hand, he led me into a small room, where M. Galand admitted his favourite customers.

I was very hungry, and saw with lively satisfaction the preparations for a repast, of which I was to partake. A waiting-maid, from twenty-five to thirty years, well made, and with a face and good humour which such girls have, who can constitute the felicity of a whole regiment, brought in the dishes. She was a native of Liege; lively, agreeable, chattering her patois, and uttering every moment such low witticisms as excited greatly the mirth of the serjeant, who was delighted with her. "She is the sister-in-law of our host," said he to me; "what cat-heads she has! she is as plump as a ball, and as round as a buoy—a dainty lass, upon my faith." At the same time Dufailli, pulling her about, began to play all sorts of naval tricks; sometimes drawing her on his knees, sometimes applying to her shining cheeks one of those hearty smacks which bespeaks more love than discretion.

I confess I was annoyed at this coquetry, which delayed our meal, when mademoiselle Jeannette, (so was the nymph called,) having abruptly broken from the

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arms of my Amphitryon, returned with part of a devilled turkey and two bottles, which she placed before us.

"Well done," said the serjeant; "here is wherewithal to moisten our food, and increase the juices. I shall play my part. After that we shall see; for here, my boy, it is all as I wish. I have only to make a signal. Is it not so, Jeannette? Yes, my comrade," continued he, "I am master here."

I congratulated him on so much good fortune, and we began to eat and drink with might and main. It was long since I had been at such a festival, and I played my part manfully. Abundance of bottles were emptied; and we were about, I believe, to uncork the seventh, when the serjeant went out, and soon returned, bringing with him two new guests, a forager and a serjeant-major. "Five-and-twenty gods! I like good fellowship," cried Dufailli. "By Jove, I have made two recruits. I know how to go recruiting; ask these gentlemen."

"O yes," said the forager, "he is the cock, father Dufailli, to invent plots to seduce conscripts; when I think of them, I remember my own adventure."—"Ah, you still remember that!"—"Yes, yes, my old lad, I remember it, and the major also, when you were deep enough to enlist him as secretary to the regiment."

"Well! has he not done well? A thousand thunders! is it not better to be the first accountable man in an artillery company than sit scratching away on paper in a study? What say you, forager?"—"I agree with you; but"—"But, but, you will tell me perhaps, you, that you were happier when, with your old dog of a master, you were obliged to lay hold of the watering-pot, and make yourself dripping wet with throwing frogs' spawn over your tulips. We were going to embark at Brest on board 'l'Invincible,' and you would only go out as a flower-gardener.—Well then, said I, go as flower-gardener; the captain likes flowers;

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every man to his taste, but also every man to his trade; and I carried on mine. I think I see you now; you were rather disappointed when, instead of employing yourself in cultivating marine plants, as you expected, you were sent to man the shrouds of a thirty-six: and when you were ordered to fire a bomb-shell! that was a nosegay for you! But no more of that; and let us drink a measure of wine. Come, lads, here's to our comrades."

I filled all the glasses, and the serjeant continued—"You see that I am not wanted now, therefore let us make of all of us but a pair of friends. This is easily done; I have caught these nicely in my snare, but that is nothing; we recruiters of the marines are but fools to the recruiters of earlier days: you are still but greenhorns—Ah, you never knew Belle-Rose: he was the lad for taking in the knowing ones! Such as I am, I was not a thorough noodle, and yet he twisted me completely round his finger. I think I have already told you the tale; but at all events I will give it you again for the general good.

"Under the ancient régime, do you see, we had colonies, the isle of France, Bourbon, Martinique, Guadaloupe, Senegal, Guyana, Louisiana, St. Domingo, &c.; now they are ours no longer; we have only the isle of Oleron left; it is little more than nothing; or, as somebody said, it is a foot of earth whilst we wait for the rest. The descent would have restored us all the others; but bah, the descent—we must no longer think of that, that is settled; the flotilla will rot in the port, and they will make firewood of the hulls. But I am getting out of my latitude, steering seaward, instead of landward; now then for Belle-Rose! for I believe it was of Belle-Rose that I was speaking.

"As I told you, he was a spark who had cut his wisdom-teeth, and in his time young fellows were not of the same kidney with those of the present day.

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"I had left Arras at fourteen, and been at Paris for six months, apprentice to a gunsmith, when, one morning, my master desired me to carry to the colonel of the carabineers, who lived in the Place Royale, a pair of pistols which he had been repairing. I soon performed this commission, and unfortunately these cursed pistols should return eighteen francs to the shop, and the colonel counted out the money, adding a trifle for myself. So far, so good; but, lo and behold, in crossing the Rue du Pelican I heard somebody knock at a window; I raised my eyes, supposing that I should see some acquaintance, when what should I see but a madame de Pompadour who, with all her charms displayed, was tapping at a window, and who, by an inclination of her head, accompanied with a charming smile, invited me to go up to her. She might have been called a picture moving in its frame. A magnificent neck, a skin white as snow, a wide chest, and above all a delightful countenance, combined to inflame me. I went up the stairs four at a time, and on introducing myself to my princess, I found her a divinity. 'Approach, my little one,' said she to me, tapping my cheek lightly; 'you are going to make me a little present are you not?"

"I put my trembling hand into my pocket, and taking out the piece of money given me by the colonel—'Well, my child,' continued she, 'I think you are a Picardy lad, and I am your countrywoman—Oh, you wish to treat your townswoman to a glass of wine.'

"The request was urged so sweetly, that I had no power of denial left, and the eighteen francs of the colonel were trenched upon. One glass produced another, that generated a third, which begot a fourth, and so on, until I was drunk with wine and delight. Night arrived, and I know not how, but I awoke in the street on a heap of stones at the gate of the hotel des Fermes.

"My surprise was great on looking about me, and

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still more when on looking in my purse, the birds were flown.

"How could I return to my master's? Where sleep? I determined to walk about till daybreak; I had only to kill time, or rather torment myself about the consequences of a first fault. I turned mechanically towards the market of the Innocents. Mind how you trust your countrywomen! said I to myself! I am nicely fleeced! If I had only some money left—

"I confess that at this moment some droll ideas crossed my brain. I had often seen pasted upon the walls of Paris—'Pocket-book Lost,' with one thousand, two thousand, or even three thousand francs reward for the person who would bring it back. I thought I might find one of these, and looking carefully about me on the pavement, and walking like a man who is looking for something, I was seriously intent on the probability of finding so good a windfall, when I was aroused from my reverie by a blow of a fist, which encountered my back. 'What, my boy, you out so early this morning?'—'Ah, is it you, Fanfan; and by what chance in this quarter at this hour?'

"Fanfan was a pastry-cook's apprentice, whom I knew, and in a moment he told me that he had left the oven for the last six weeks; that he had a mistress who fitted him out; that for a short time, he was from home, because the intimate friend of his mistress had chosen to sleep with her. 'As for the rest,' said he, 'I wink at it. If I pass a night at the Sourcière, I return to my haunt next morning, and recover myself during the day.' Fanfan the pastry-cook appeared to me a keen fellow; and thinking that he might devise some plan to extricate me from my embarrassment, I told him the whole of it.

"'Is that all?' said he; 'Come to me at mid-day at the public-house at the Barriere des Sergents; and I may give you some useful counsel: under any circumstances we'll dine together.'

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"I was punctual at the rendezvous, and Fanfan did not keep me waiting; he was there before me, and on my entrance, I was led into a small room, where I found him seated before a tub of oysters, with a female on each side of him, one of whom, on perceiving me, burst out into a loud fit of laughter. 'Ah, what is that for?' said Fanfan. 'Oh heaven, it is my towns-man.' —'It is my towns-woman,' said I, confused. 'Yes, my little one, it is your towns-woman.' I was going to complain of the trick she had served me on the previous evening, but embracing Fanfan, whom she called her *pet*, she laughed more heartily than before, and I saw that the best thing I could do was to join in the laugh like a jolly fellow.

"'Well,' said Fanfan, pouring out a glass of white wine, and helping me to a dozen oysters, 'you see, you must never despair of Providence. We have some pigs' feet on the gridiron, do you like pigs' feet?' And before I could answer his question, they were put on the table. The appetite I displayed was so much in the affirmative, that Fanfan had no further occasion to ask my opinion of them. The chablis soon put me in spirits, and I forgot the disagreeables which had given me such cause of dreading my master; and, as the companion of my towns-woman had cast a gracious eye on me, I did not hesitate to make desperate love to her. By the honour of Dufailli! she was soon won, and gave me her hand.

"'You really love me then,' said Fanchette—so was my damsel named.—'Love you?' said I; 'why, if you like, we will be married.' 'That is right,' said Fanfan, 'marry; and to commence, I will wed you at once. I marry you, my boy; do you understand? so embrace;' and at the same time, he united our hands and drew our faces towards each other. 'Poor child,' said Fanchette, giving me a second kiss without the aid of my friend, 'be easy; I will instruct you.'

"I was in paradise, and spent a delightful day. In

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the evening I went to bed with Fanchette, and we were mutually pleased with each other.

"My education was soon perfected. Fanchette was delighted at having met with a pupil who profited so well from her instructions, and recompensed me generously.

"At this period the Notables had just assembled, and they were good pigeons. Fanchette plucked them, and we shared the spoil. Each day we banqueted without limit. These Notables supplied our throats as well as exerting their own! And I had always a well-supplied purse.

"Fanchette and I denied ourselves nothing; but how brief are the moments of happiness! Oh, how brief!

"Scarcely had a month of this charming life elapsed, when Fanchette and my towns-woman were apprehended and taken to prison. What had they done? I do not know, but evil tongues said something about the abstraction of a repeating-watch. I, who had no particular wish to make acquaintance with the lieutenant-general of police, thought it best to make as few inquiries as possible.

"This arrest was a blow which we had not looked for. Fanfan and I were overwhelmed at it. Fanchette was such a dear girl! and then how was I to carry on the war? My kettle was upset; farewell oysters, farewell chablis, farewell hours of love! I should have stuck to my anvil; and Fanfan reproached himself for having quitted his patty-pans.

"We were walking sorrowfully on the Quai de la Ferraille, when we were suddenly aroused by a sound of military music, two clarinets, a large drum, and cymbals. The crowd had gathered round this band, stationed in a car, above which floated colours and plumes of all colours. I think they were playing the air 'Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?' (Where can we find joys equal to those at home?) When the musicians had finished, the drums beat a roll, and

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a gentleman, covered with gold lace, got up and spoke, showing a large representation of a soldier in full uniform. 'By the authority of his majesty,' said he, 'I am here to explain to the subjects of the king of France the advantages which he offers in admitting them to his colonies. Young men who are round me, you must have heard of the land of Cocagne, and it is to India that we must go to find this fortunate country. There we must go if we would live in clover.

"'Would you have gold, pearls, or diamonds? the roads are paved with them; you have only to stoop and pick them up, and not even that, for the savages will collect them for you.

"'Do you love women? There they are for all tastes; negresses, who belong to all the world; then creoles, white as you or I, and who dote to madness on white men, which is natural enough in a country where the men are all black; and note particularly that every one of them is as rich as Crœsus; which, between ourselves, is very advantageous in marriage.

"'Do you love wine? It is like the women, of all sorts; Malaga, Bourdeaux, Champagne, &c. For instance,—you must not often expect to meet with Burgundy, I will not deceive you, it will not bear sea carriage; but ask for any other that is made throughout the world, at sixpence a bottle, and believe me, you will find them but too happy to procure it for you. Yes, gentlemen, for sixpence; and that cannot surprise you, when you learn that sometimes one, two, or three hundred ships, loaded with wines, arrive at the same time in one single harbour. Picture to yourself the embarrassment of the captains; in haste to return, they quickly unload, and announce that they shall esteem it a favour from any who will empty the casks gratis.

"'That is not all. Do not you think it would be a sweet life always to have sugar in plenty? I have not mentioned coffee, lemons, pomegranates, oranges, pine-apples, and the millions of delicious fruits which grow

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here as wild as they did in Paradise; I say nothing of the liqueurs of these islands, which are so much in esteem, and which are so agreeable, that, saving your presence, they may be called the emanations of the good God and the holy angels.

" ' If I were addressing women or children, I might expatiate on all these delicacies, but I am speaking to men.

" ' Sons of family, I am not ignorant of the efforts usually made by parents to restrain young people from the path which must lead to fortune; but be more rational than the papas, and particularly the mammas.

" ' Do not listen to them, when they tell you that the savages eat the Europeans with only a little salt: that was all very well in the days of Christopher Columbus and Robinson Crusoe.

" ' Do not listen to them, when they endeavour to terrify you about the yellow fever. The yellow fever? Gentlemen, if it was as terrible as people say, there would be nothing but hospitals in the country, and God knows that there is not a single one.

" ' Doubtless they will frighten you about the climate, I am too frank not to confess it; the climate is warm, but nature is so prodigal in giving refreshments, that, in truth, we must attend to the thing, or we should not perceive it.

" ' They will alarm you about the sting of the musquitoes, and the bite of rattle-snakes. But have you not slaves always about you expressly to drive away the former, and does not the noise of the latter sufficiently inform you of its approach?

" ' They will talk to you of shipwrecks. Know that I have crossed the sea fifty-seven times; that I have again and again crossed the line; that I look on going from one pole to the other, like drinking a glass of water; and although on the ocean there is neither wooden sledges nor nurses, I think myself more secure on board a seventy-four, than in the inside of the coach to Auxerre, or on the conveyance from Paris to St.

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Cloud. That must be enough to dissipate all fears. I might add a variety of delights; I might talk of the chase, sporting, fishing; imagine to yourself forests, where the game is so tame that it never thinks of running away, and so timid that if you only call to it, it falls down; imagine rivers and lakes, where fish are so abundant that they choke the waters. This is all very wonderful, but perfectly true.

" ' I had nearly forgotten to talk to you of horses. Horses, gentlemen; you cannot take a step without meeting with thousands of them; you might call them flocks of sheep, only that they are larger; are you fond of them? do you like riding? Only take a rope in your pocket, which should be rather long, and you must make a running knot in it; you seize the moment when the animals are grazing, and afraid of nothing, you then approach quietly, and make your choice; and when your choice is made, you throw the cord, the horse is yours, you have only to back him and lead him where you please and think proper; for, remember, that here every man is uncontrolled in his actions.

" ' Yes, gentlemen, I repeat it, it is all true, very true; the proof is, that the king of France, his majesty Louis XVI., who can almost hear me in his palace, authorizes me on his part to offer you these advantages. Should I dare to lie so near to him.

" ' The king desires to clothe you, the king wishes to support you, he wishes to make you rich men; in return, he asks but little from you; no labour, and good pay; good nourishment; to rise up and lie down at pleasure; exercise once a month, at the parade of St. Louis; this, for I will conceal nothing, cannot be dispensed with, unless you get leave, which is never refused. These obligations done, your time is your own. What more can you desire? a good engagement? you shall have it: but hasten, I advise you, to-morrow will perhaps be too late, the ships are about to start, and

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only wait for a fair wind to set sail. Hasten, then, near to Paris; hasten. If, perchance, you should grow tired of doing well, you shall have dismissal when you please; a bark is always in port, ready to conduct to Europe those who are home sick; it is expressly used for that purpose. Let those who desire to have further particulars, come to me; I have no occasion to tell my name; I am very well known; my residence is only a few paces distant, at the first lamp, at the house of a wine-merchant. Ask for M. Belle-Rose.'

"My situation made me attentive to this harangue, which I have remembered, although it is twenty years since I heard it, and I do not think that I forget a single word.

"It made no less impression on Fanfan, and we were consulting together, when a shabby-looking fellow, whom we had not at all offended, gave Fanfan a blow, which knocked his hat off. 'I will teach you,' said he, 'you puppy, to grin at me.' Fanfan was bewildered by the blow, and I defended him, when the blackguard raised his hand against me; we were soon surrounded, and the quarrel was growing warm, and the people flocked round, trying who should see most of it. Suddenly, some one separated the crowd; it was M. Belle-Rose. 'What is all this?' said he; and looking at Fanfan, who was crying, 'I think this gentleman has been struck—that cannot be put up with; but the gentleman is brave, and that will settle the business.' Fanfan was desirous of showing that he had done nothing wrong, and then that he had not been struck. 'It is all the same, my friend,' replied Belle-Rose; 'it cannot be settled that way.' 'Certainly,' said the bully, 'it cannot be decided in this way. The gentleman insulted me, and shall give me satisfaction; one of us must fall.'

"'Well, well, be it so; he will give you satisfaction,' replied Belle-Rose: 'I will answer for these gentle-

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men; what is your hour?'—'Yours.'—'Five in the morning, behind the bishop's palace;—I will bring weapons.'

"Upon this the blackguard retired; and Belle-Rose striking Fanfan on the stomach, heard some pieces chink in the waistcoat pocket, where he carried his money, the last relics of our former splendour. 'Really, my lad, I take an interest in you,' said he; 'you must come with me; our friend here must go with us:' and so saying, he gave me a poke, similar to that he had bestowed on Fanfan.

"M. Belle-Rose conducted us into the Rue de la Juiverie, to a wine-merchant's, where he made us enter. 'I will not enter with you,' said he to us; 'a man like me must preserve decorum: I am going to pull off my uniform, and will join you in a minute. Ask for a red seal and three glasses.' He left us. 'A red seal,' said he, turning round; 'mind the red seal.'

"We executed the orders of M. Belle-Rose, who was not long in returning, and whom we received cap-in-hand. 'Ah! my boys,' said he, 'put on your hats; no ceremonies between us; I am going to sit down: where is my glass? the first come, the first served. (He drank it down at a gulp.) I am devilish thirsty, and the dust sticks in my throat.'

"M. Belle-Rose poured out a second whilst he spoke, and then wiping his forehead with a handkerchief, he leant his two elbows on the table, and assumed a mysterious air, which began to disquiet us.

"'Ah! my young friends, it is to-morrow that we are to have the brush. Do you know,' said he to Fanfan, 'that you have a devil to meet?—one of the best fencers in France: he pinked St. George.' 'He pinked St. George,' repeated Fanfan, looking most piteously at me. 'Ah! indeed, he pinked St. George; but that is not all,—he has a most unlucky hand' 'And so have I,' said Fanfan. 'What you too?'—'By Jove, I think a day never passed, when I was at my master's, that I did not break something, if only a

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plate or two.' 'Oh, you misunderstand me, my boy, said Belle-Rose; 'we say that a man has an unlucky hand, when he always kills the man whom he fights.'

"The explanation was but too clear. Fanfan trembled in every limb, the sweat ran down his forehead in large drops, white and blue clouds pervaded the red cheeks of the pastrycook's apprentice, his face lengthened, his heart beat, and he would have suffocated, had he not heaved an enormous sigh.

"'Bravo!' cried Belle-Rose, taking his hand in his own, 'I like men who have no fear. You are not afraid.' Then, striking the table, 'Waiter, another bottle of the same; mind you, my friend here pays. Get up a little, my friend; move yourself—stir about—stretch out your arm—circulate your blood—thrust out: that's it,—splendid! admirable! superb!' And during this time Belle-Rose emptied his glass. 'On the honour of Belle-Rose I could make a fencer of you. Do you know, you have an excellent idea of it. You would do well at it; there are more than four of our masters not so well made for it as you. What a pity you were never taught; but nothing is impossible, you have frequented the schools?'—'Oh, I swear not,' replied Fanfan. 'Come, confess that you fight well.'—'No, not at all.'—'No modesty; why conceal your talent that way, I can easily perceive it.'—'I protest to you,' said I, 'that he never handled a foil in his life.'—'Since you attest it, sir, I must believe; but, ah! you are two deep fellows; you must not teach old apes how to grin; tell me the truth, and do not fear that I would betray you: am not I your friend? If you have no confidence in me, I may as well go. Farewell, gentlemen,' continued Belle-Rose, with a provoked air, going towards the door, as if about to depart.

"'Oh, M. Belle-Rose, do not forsake us,' cried Fanfan. 'Rather ask my friend if I have deceived you. I am a pastrycook by trade, and I cannot help my fate I have handled the rolling-pin, but,—

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"'I saw you had handled something,' said Belle-Rose. 'I like sincerity, such sincerity as yours; it is the chief of military virtues; with that we may go to any extent. I am sure you would make an admirable soldier. But that is not our present business. Waiter, a bottle of wine. Since you tell me you never did fight, I will believe nothing again—(after a moment's silence)—Never mind, my delight is to confer happiness on young people. I will teach you a thrust—a single thrust. (Fanfan stared.) You must promise me not to show it to anybody.'—'I swear it,' said Fanfan. 'Well, you will be the first to whom I ever showed it. I must love you! It is a thrust unequalled; one which I kept only to myself. Never mind, I will initiate you at daylight to-morrow.'

"From this moment Fanfan appeared less alarmed, and overpowered M. Belle-Rose with thanks. We drank a few more glasses, during a multitude of protestations on one side and gratitude on the other; and then, as it was growing late, M. Belle-Rose took leave of us like a man who knew the world. Before he left us he showed us a place where we could sleep. 'Say that you come from me,' said he, 'at Griffon's, in the Rue de la Mortellerie; sleep in peace, and you shall find all go well.' Fanfan paid the bill, and then Belle-Rose said, 'Good night, to-morrow I shall come and wake you.'

"We went to Griffon's where we procured beds. Fanfan cou'd not close an eye, and was perhaps impatient to learn the thrust which M. Belle-Rose had promised to teach him; or he might be frightened; perhaps he was.

"At the first peep of day the key turned in the lock, and some one entered. It was Belle-Rose. 'Come, boys; what, still asleep! Hear the muster-call, my lads,' cried he. In a moment we jumped up. When we were ready, he went out a moment with Fanfan, and they soon afterwards returned. 'Let us go,' said Belle-Rose: 'mind, no nonsense: you have

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nothing to do but give the twisting thrust, and he will pink himself.'

"In spite of his lesson, Fanfan was not quite tranquil; and having reached the ground, he was more dead than alive. The adversary and his second had arrived already. 'Here we are,' said Belle-Rose, taking the foils which he had given to me; and breaking off the buttons, he measured the blades. 'Neither of them is six inches longer than the other. Come, take this,' said he to M. Fanfan, giving him one of the foils.

"Fanfan hesitated; and on the second offer, seized the handle so clumsily that he let it fall. 'That is nothing,' said Belle-Rose, picking it up, and putting it in Fanfan's hand: he then placed him opposite his adversary. 'Mind, guard! We shall see who will tickle his man.'

"'One moment,' said the second of the opponent; 'I have a question to ask first, sir,' said he, addressing Fanfan, who could scarcely support himself, 'are you either master or provost?'—'What do you say?' replied Fanfan, with the voice of a man half dead. 'According to the laws of duelling,' responded the second, 'my duty compels me to summon you to declare on your honour, are you master or provost?' Fanfan was silent, and looked at Belle-Rose as if to ask him what he should say. 'Speak, sir, said the second to Fanfan. 'I am—I am—I am only an apprentice,' stammered Fanfan. 'Apprentice means amateur,' added Belle-Rose. 'In this case,' continued the second, 'the gentleman amateur must undress; for our business is with his skin.'—'That is just,' said Belle-Rose, 'I did not think of that; he will undress himself: quick, quick, M. Fanfan, off with coat and shirt.'

"Fanfan cut a scurvy figure; the sleeves of his doublet were very tight, and he unbuttoned at one end and buttoned up at the other. When he had taken off his waistcoat, he could not undo the strings

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of the neck of his shirt, and was compelled to cut them; and at last, except his breeches, was as naked as a worm. Belle-Rose again gave him the foil. 'Now, my friend,' said he, 'mind your guard!'—'Defend yourself,' cried his adversary; swords were crossed. Fanfan's blade shook and trembled; the other weapon was motionless. Fanfan seemed about to faint.

"'Enough,' suddenly cried Belle-Rose and the second, 'you are two brave fellows; enough, you must not cut each other's throats; be friends, embrace, and let there be no further dispute. Good God! all that is good need not be killed. But he is a gallant young lad. Be appeased, M. Fanfan.'

"Fanfan breathed again, and plucked up when his courage was mentioned; his opponent made some difficulties about consenting to an arrangement, but at length was softened; and they embraced, whilst it was agreed that the reconciliation should be completed by breakfasting at a drinking house near Notre Dame, where there was good wine to be had.

"When we reached the place, the breakfast was spread and ready.

"Before we sat down, M. Belle-Rose took Fanfan and myself aside. 'Well,' said he, 'you know now what a duel is; it is not an out of the way matter; I am content with you, my dear Fanfan, you behaved like an angel. But you must be great throughout: you understand me—you must not allow him to pay.'

"At these words Fanfan turned very red; for he knew the depth of our purse. 'Oh, good Lord, let the mutton boil,' added Belle-Rose, who saw his embarrassment. 'If you are out of cash I will take care of all that; here, do you want money? Will you have thirty francs?—or sixty? Amongst friends, that is nothing.' And so saying, he drew a dozen crowns from his pocket—'With you they are in good keeping, and will bring good luck.'

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"Fanfan hesitated. 'Accept them, and pay me when you can. On these terms there can be no hesitation in borrowing.' I jogged Fanfan's elbow, as much as to say, 'Take it.' He obeyed; and we pocketed the crowns, touched at the kindness of Belle-Rose.

"He was soon, however, to skin us of them. Experience is a great teacher, and M. Belle-Rose was a deep fellow!

"Breakfast went off with spirit; we talked much of the avarice of parents—the brutalities of apprentices' masters—of the blessings of independence—the immense wealth amassed in the Indies: the names of the Cape, Chandernagor, Calcutta, Pondicherry, and Tippoo-Saib were adroitly introduced; examples were quoted of the vast fortunes made by the young men whom Belle-Rose had recently engaged. 'It is not to boast,' said he, 'but I am not an unlucky fellow: it was I who enlisted little Martin; and now he is a nabob, rolling in gold and silver. I will bet that he has grown proud; and perhaps if he saw me would not recognise me. Oh, I have found many ingrates in my time! But what of that? It is the fate of man!'

"Our sitting was a long one. At the dessert, M. Belle-Rose again brought on the carpet the fine fruits of the Antilles: whilst he drank the wine, 'Cape wine for ever,' said he; 'how delicious that is.' With the coffee he expatiated on the Martinique: when they brought the cognac, 'Ah! ah!' said he, making a grimace, 'this is not equal to the rum, and still less the excellent pine-apple of Jamaica;' they poured out some parfait amour: 'This is drinkable,' said he, 'but still it is not even small beer in comparison with the liqueurs of the celebrated madame Anfous.'

"Belle-Rose was seated between Fanfan and myself, and during the whole repast took great care of us. He kept up the incessant song of 'Empty your glasses,

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and he filled them incessantly. 'Who made you such half-wet birds?' said he at intervals. 'Come, another glass, look at me, and do as I do.'

"These phrases, and many others, had due effect. Fanfan and I were pretty well done up; he particularly. 'M. Belle-Rose, is it very far to the colonies, Chandernagor, Seringapatam?—are they very far off?' he repeated, from time to time, and he imagined himself already embarked, so completely was he imbued with the flourishing accounts. 'Patience,' said Belle-Rose, at length, 'and we shall get there; and in the mean time I am going to tell you a story. One day, when I was on guard at the governor's——'—'One day when he was governor,' said Fanfan. 'Hold your peace,' said Belle-Rose, putting his hand upon his mouth, 'it was only when I was a private,' he continued; 'I was quietly seated in front of my sentry-box, reposing on a sofa, when my negro, who carried my gun,—you must know that in the colonies every soldier has his male and female slave, as we might here have domestics of both sexes; only that you may do with them what you please; and if it be your pleasure, you may kill them as you would a fly; for you have power of life and death over them. As for the woman, you do what you please with her;—I was on guard, as I just told you, and my negro was carrying my gun——'

"M. Belle-Rose had scarcely got so far, when a soldier in full dress entered the room, and gave him a letter, which he opened with haste. 'It is from the minister of the marine,' said he; 'M. de Sartine tells me, that the service of the king summons me to Surinam. The devil!' added he, addressing Fanfan and me, 'how awkward it is; I did not think of quitting so soon; but as they say, he who reckons without his host, reckons twice: never mind.'

"Belle-Rose then, taking his glass in his right hand, knocked several times on the table, and whilst the

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other guests withdrew, a waiting-maid entered. 'The bill, and send your master;' and the master came with the bill of our expenses. 'Astonishing how soon it mounts up,' observed Belle-Rose: 'one hundred and ninety livres, twelve sous, six deniers! Ah! M. Nivet, do you want to skin us alive? Here is an item I will not pass by—four lemons, twenty-four sous. We only had three—reduction the first. Peste, papa Nivet, I am not surprised at your making a fortune. Seven half-glasses, that is very fine; but how do you make it out, when there were only six of us? I shall find other mistakes, I am convinced. Asparagus, eighteen livres; that is too much.'—'In April,' said M. Nivet, 'and so early!'—'Well, that is right; young peas, artichokes, fish, lettuces, strawberries, twenty-four livres—that is correct. The wine is fair enough: now *I* will add it up. Put down nought and carry one—the total is correct, deducting the twelve sous and the six deniers there remains one hundred and ninety livres. Well, will you give me credit for the amount, papa Nivet?'—'Oh!' replied the landlord, 'yesterday, yes; to-day, no; credit on land as long as you please, but once at sea, how am I to be repaid? at Surinam? Devil take the sea-going creditors. I tell you money I want, and you shall not go out till I am satisfied: otherwise I shall send for the watch, and we shall then see ——'

"M. Nivet went out in an apparent rage.

"'He is a man of his word,' said Belle-Rose to us. 'But an idea strikes me; in great distresses, great remedies. Doubtlessly you have no greater wish than myself to be led before M. Lenoir between four guards. The king gives 100 francs a man for recruits; there are two of you, that makes 200 francs; sign your enrolment; I will go and get the cash, then return and free you. What say you?'

"Fanfan and I looked at each other in silence. 'What! do you hesitate? I had a better opinion of you. I, who would cut myself in quarters—and then

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I do not ask you to do an unpleasant thing. Heavens! that I was of your age, and knew what I know! We have always resources whilst we are young. Come,' he added, presenting the paper to us, 'now is your time to coin money; put your name at the bottom of this paper.'

"The persuasions of Belle-Rose were so pressing, and we were so fearful of the watch, that we signed. 'That is right,' said he, 'now I will go and pay; if you are vexed there is always time: you will have nothing to do but return the money; but we shall not come to that. Patience, my friends, I will soon return.'

"Belle-Rose soon went out and quickly returned.

"'The embargo is removed,' said he, 'and now we are free to go or stay; but you have not yet seen madame Belle-Rose, I wish to introduce you to her: she is a woman with wit to the end of her nails.'

"M. Belle-Rose conducted us to his house; his lodging was not over brilliant—two rooms on the back of a mean-looking house a little distance from the Arch-Marion. Madame Belle-Rose was in a recess at the end of the second room, her head resting on a heap of pillows. Near her bed were two crutches: and at a little distance, a night table, a spitting-box, a shell snuff-box, a silver goblet, and a bottle of brandy nearly emptied. Madame Belle-Rose was about forty-five or fifty: she was attired in a stylish morning gown, with top-knot and head-dress of lace. Her face was distorted as we entered by a violent fit of coughing. 'Wait till she has done,' said Belle-Rose to us: and at length, her cough ceasing, 'Can you talk, my duck?'—'Yes, my precious,' she answered.—'Well, you will oblige me by informing my friends here what fortunes are made in the colonies.'—'Immense! M. Belle-Rose, immense!'—'What alliances?'—'What alliances? Superb! M. Belle-Rose, superb! the meanest heiress has millions of piastres.'—'What life do they lead?'—'The life of a prince, M. Belle-Rose.'

"'You see,' said the husband, 'I did not make her say so.'

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"The farce was thus performed. M. Belle-Rose offered us the refreshment of a glass of rum: we drank to his wife, and she drank to our good voyage. 'For I suppose,' she added, that these gentlemen are ours. My dear fellow,' said she to Fanfan, 'you have the face they like in those parts; square shoulders, wide chest, well-made leg, nose à la Bourbon.' Then turning to me, 'And you too; oh! you are well-limbed fellows.'—'And lads too, who will not allow themselves to be trampled on,' added Belle-Rose; 'this gentleman has been at it already this morning.' 'What, already! I congratulate him. Come here, my dear sir, and let me kiss you; I always liked young fellows, that is my taste: every one has their inclination. Do not be jealous, Belle-Rose.'—'Jealous of what? My friend behaved like a second Bayard, as I shall tell the regiment; the colonel shall know it, and advancement must follow—corporal at least, if not an officer. Ah, when you have the epaulette on your shoulders you will be a noted brave man!' Fanfan jumped for joy. As for me, sure that I was no less brave than him, I said to myself, 'If he advances, I shall not hang back.' We were both very happy.

"'I ought to tell you one thing,' pursued the recruiter; 'recommended as you are, you must excite jealousy; there are envious people everywhere, in regiments as well as elsewhere; but remember that if they use a word of abuse I shall take it up; once under my protection — enough. Write to me.'—'What!' said Fanfan, 'do not you go with us?'—'No, replied Belle-Rose, 'to my great regret: the minister has need of me. I shall join you at Brest. To-morrow at eight o'clock I expect you here, not later: to-day I have no leisure to remain longer with you; duty must be done. Adieu till to-morrow.'

We took leave of madame Belle-Rose, who embraced us. Next day we were, at half-past seven, aroused by the bugs which lodged with us at Griffon's. 'Give me punctual men!' said Belle-Rose, when he

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saw us; 'I am one myself.' Then assuming a more serious air: 'If you have any friends and acquaintances, you have the rest of the day for leave-taking. Now this is your route; your allowance is three sous per league, with lodging, firing, and candle. You may start as soon as you like; that is no affair of mine; but do not forget, that, if you are found in the streets of Paris to-morrow evening, the police will conduct you to your place of destination.'

"This threat cut us up root and branch; but as we had baked, so we must brew; and we started. From Paris to Brest is a famous long walk, but, in spite of blisters, we made ten leagues a day. We arrived at last, but not without having a thousand times cursed Belle-Rose. A month afterwards we embarked. Ten years afterwards, day for day, I was made corporal, and Fanfan also promoted; he was knocked on the head at St. Domingo, during Leclerc's expedition. He was a devil amongst the negro women. As for me, I have yet a steady foot and good eye; my chest is well lined, and I may have the luck to bury you all. I have passed many rough days in my life; been thrown from one colony to another; I have rolled my ball as I went, and I have not been a loser; never mind, the children of glee will never die;—and then, when they are no more here, they are to be found elsewhere," continued the serjeant Dufailli, striking the pockets of his uniform; and then lifting up his waistcoat, exposed a leather belt, apparently well lined. "I say, there is yet butter in the churn, and yellow enough too, without counting what we may chance to borrow from the English. The India-Company owe me a balance still, which some three-masters will bring."—"In the mean time, all goes well with you, father Dufailli," said the forager. "Very well," said the serjeant-major. Yes, very well, indeed, thought I; determining to cultivate an acquaintance which chance rendered so propitious for me.

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CHAPTER XIX.

Continuation of the same day—The Cotemporaine—An adjutant de place—The daughters of mother Thomas—The silver lion—Captain Paulet and his lieutenant—The pirates—The bombardment—Departure of Lord Lauderdale—The disguised actress—The executioner—Henry the Ninth and his ladies—I embark—Sea-fight—Paulet's second is killed—Capture of a brig of war—My Sosia—I change my name—Death of Dufailli—Twelfth-day—A frigate sunk—I wish to save two lovers—A tempest—The fishermen's wives.

Whilst giving us the scene of the recruiters, father Dufailli had drank at every sentence. He was of opinion that words flowed best when moistened. He might, to be sure, have used water; but he had a great horror of that, he said, ever since he fell into the sea, which was in 1789. Thus it happened, that, partly through drinking and partly through talking, he got drunk imperceptibly. At last he reached a point, at which he found it impossible to express himself, but with the utmost difficulty; his tongue became what we call thick. And then the forager and serjeant-major retired.

Dufailli and I remained alone: he was asleep and leant on the table, and begun to snore; whilst I coolly gave myself up to a train of reflexions. Three hours elapsed, and he had not finished his sleep. When he awoke, he was quite surprised to find any one near him; at first, he looked at me as through a thick fog, which did not allow him to distinguish my features, but insensibly the vapour disappeared, and he recognised me, which was all he could do. He stumbled as he arose; and ordering a basin of coffee, without milk, into which he emptied a salt-cellar, swallowed the liquid with small gulps; and having got rid of his short sword, he took my arm, dragging me towards the door. My aid was most needful to him; it was the vine twining about the elm. "You are going to

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tow me," said he, "and I will pilot you. Do you see the telegraph? What does it say, with its arms in the air?"—"It makes signals that the Dufailli is lying to." "The Dufailli,—thousand gods! a ship of three hundred tons at least. Do not fear; all's right with Dufailli." At the same time, without letting go my arm, he took off his hat, and placing it on the end of his finger, spun it round. "See my compass; attention—we go as the cockade points—weather the cape of the Rue des Prêcheurs! forward, march!" ordered Dufailli; and we took together the road to the lower town, after he had put on his hat with much noise.

Dufailli had promised to advise me, but he was not in a state to do it. I anxiously desired that he should recover his reason, but, unfortunately, the air and exercise produced a precisely opposite effect. On going down the main street, we were obliged to enter every public-house, with which the residence of the army had filled the place; everywhere made a stay, shorter or longer. I endeavoured to make them as brief as possible. Each shop, Dufailli said, was a port, into which we must put, and each port increased the cargo, which he had already so much difficulty to carry. "I am as full as a beggar," said he to me, in broken words; "and yet I am not a beggar, for beggars never get drunk, do they my boy?"

Twenty times I resolved on leaving him; but Dufailli, when sober, might aid me; I remembered his full girdle, and even without that, I knew well that he had other resources than his serjeant's pay. Having reached the church in the Place d'Alton, he took it into his head to have his shoes brushed, which, when done, he lost his balance in moving from the stool; and, thinking he would fall, I approached to support him. "What, countryman, don't fear because I make a reel or two; I have a sailor's foot." In the mean time the brush had given brightness to his shoes; and when they were completely blackened, "Come, the finishing touch," said Dufailli; "or is that for to-mor-

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row?" At the same time he gave him a sous. "You will not make a rich man of me, serjeant."—"What, do you grumble?—mind I don't kill you." Dufailli made a gesture, but his hat fell off, and, blown by the wind, rolled along the pavement; the shoe-black ran after it and brought it back. "It is not worth twopence," cried Dufailli; "never mind, you are a good fellow." Then thrusting his hands into his pockets, he took out a handful of money: "Here, drink to my health."—"Thanks, my colonel," said the shoe-black, who proportioned his titles to the generosity he met with.

"I must now," said Dufailli, who seemed by degrees to recover his senses, "lead you into good quarters." I had made up my mind to accompany him wherever he went. I had witnessed his liberality, and I was not ignorant that drunkards are the most grateful persons possible to those who give them their company. I allowed myself then to be piloted as he wished, and we reached the Rue des Prêcheurs. At the door of a new house, of elegant appearance, was a sentry and several soldiers. "This is it," said he. "What, here? Are you going to take me to the staff-major?"—"The staff-major!—nonsense; I say it is the beautiful and fair Magdelaine's; or, if you like it better, 'madame quarante mille hommes' (madam forty thousand men) as they call her."—"Impossible, Dufailli, you are under some mistake."—"Oh, I see double, do I? Is not that the sentinel?" Dufailli advanced while speaking, and asked for admittance. "Go back," said a quarter-master, roughly; "you ought to know well enough that this is not your day." Dufailli persisted. "Go away, I tell you," said the subaltern, "or I will take you to the black hole." This threat made me tremble all over.

Dufailli's obstinacy might be fatal to me, and yet it would not have been prudent to tell him my fears; at all events not where we then were; and I therefore only made some observations to him, which were

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however entirely lost upon him in his present state. "Let the fellow go and be ——, the sun shines equally for us all: liberty, equality, or death," he repeated, whilst struggling to escape the hold I kept on him, that he might not commit himself in any way. "Equality, I tell you;" and in an attitude better conceived than described, he looked at me with that stupid no-meaning stare which a man has when he has "put an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains," and reduce him to the level of a brute.

I was in despair, when, at the cry, "Present arms!" followed by this warning, "Cannoneer, mind what you do; here is the adjutant, here is Bevignac;" he suddenly seemed quite to come to himself. A shower-bath falling from a height of fifty feet, upon a maniac's head, has not so sudden an effect in restoring his senses. The name of Bevignac made a singular impression on the soldiery, who had ranged themselves in front of the ground floor of the fair Magdelaine's house. They looked at one another without, as it seemed, daring to breathe, so much were they alarmed. The adjutant, who was a tall, meagre-looking man, having arrived, began to count them, whilst he made motions with his cane. I never saw a face so deeply furrowed; on his thin and lank jaws were two small unpowdered curls; on the whole countenance might be traced a certain something, which declared that adjutant Bevignac was a perfect martinet, and determinately opposed to anything like want of discipline. Anger was visible in his face, his eyes were blood-shot, and a horrible convulsion of his jaws announced that he was about to speak. "By the devil's nest! Well! All quiet! You know orders. None but officers! By satan's nest! and every man in his turn." Then perceiving us and advancing with uplifted cane, "What are you doing here, you serjeant of powder-monkies?" I thought he was about to strike us. "Oh, I see," he added, "it is nothing; only drunk;" addressing Dufailli. "Well, a jovial trip is excusable; go to bed, and do not let me meet

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you again."—"Yes, commandant," replied Dufailli, at this order, and we went away down the Rue des Prêcheurs.

There is no occasion to mention the profession of the fair Magdelaine le Picarde; it must have been already guessed. She was a tall woman about twenty-three years of age, remarkable for the bloom of her complexion, as well as the beauty of her figure. It was her boast, that she belonged to no one person. She devoted herself, from a principle of conscience, entirely and solely to the army—the whole army—but nothing but the army: fifer or field-marshal, all who wore the uniform were equally well received by her; but she professed great contempt for what she called the snobs (pequins). There never was a citizen who could boast of her favours: she was somewhat tenacious with mariues, whom she called "tar-buckets," and fleeced at pleasure, because she could not make up her mind to look on them as soldiers; and she used to say, that the navy filled her purse, and the army was her lover. This lady, whom I had occasion to visit at a subsequent period, was, for a long time, the delight of the camp, without her health being at all impaired, and was supposed to be rich. But whether Magdelaine (as I know) was not mercenary, or whether as the old proverb goes, "What is got over the devil's back is spent under his belly," Magdelaine died in 1812, at the hospital of Ardres, poor, but true to her flag: but two years more, and, like another nymph well known in Paris, after the disaster of Waterloo, she would have had the grief of calling herself the "widow of the grand army."

The memory of Magdelaine still lives all over France, I might say Europe, amongst the remnants of the old phalanxes. She was the "cotemporaine" of that period; and if I did not well know that she is no more, I should fancy that I had again found her in the "cotemporaine" of this period. However, I must remark, that Magdelaine, although her features were

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rather masculine, had nothing vulgar in her look; the shade of her hair was not of the sickly hue of heckled hemp; the golden reflexion of her silken tresses was in perfect harmony with the tender azure of her eyes; her nose was not ill-formed, in the angular curve of its aquiline prominence. There was something of Messalina about her mouth, but yet it was kind and frank; and, besides, Magdelaine only carried on her business: she never wrote;* and, amongst all the police, only knew the city serjeants, or the night-guard, whom she paid to leave her in quiet.

The pleasure I have, after a lapse of more than twenty years, in tracing the portrait of Magdelaine, has made me for an instant forget Dufailli.

It is very difficult to eradicate an idea from a brain troubled with the fumes of wine. Dufailli had resolved on finishing the day in female society, and nothing could turn him from it. Scarcely had we taken half-a-dozen steps, than, looking back, "He has disappeared," said he; "come along, this way;" and, leaving my arm, he advanced towards a door, at which he knocked; and which, after a few minutes, was half opened, and an old woman's head appeared. "What do you want?"—"What do we want?" answered Dufailli; "don't you know me? Do not you recognise friends?"—"Ah! ah! is it you, father Dufailli; there is no room for you." "No room for friends! You're joking, mother; you are playing off some trick upon us."—"No, on the word of an honest woman; you know, my old lad, that no one is more welcome than yourself; but my eldest daughter is engaged, and so is Pauline; but we shall be glad to see you by and bye."—"Well, if it must be so, mother Thomas," said Dufailli, putting a piece of money on his eye, "it cannot be helped, but you must get us something to drink meanwhile; you have some little spare corner to put us into."—"Ay, ay, always a wag, always a wag, father Dufailli; it is im-

* This alludes to a work recently published in Paris, called "Mémoires d'une Cotemporaine."—*Translator.*

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possible to refuse your insinuating requests. Come! quick, quick, let no one see you coming in; hide yourselves there, my boys, and mum."

Madame Thomas had placed us behind an old screen, in a low room, through which all persons going out must pass. We did not wait long alone. Mademoiselle Pauline came to us first, and, having whispered to her mother, came and sat down with us to a flask of Rhenish.

Pauline was not fifteen years of age, and yet she had already acquired the dissipated air, the bold look, the loose discourse, the hoarse voice, and the disgusting manners of the common courtezan. This early prey to dissipation was destined for my amusement, and was lavish in her endearments. Therèse was better suited to the bald head of my companion, who waited until she should be at leisure; and, at length, the quick step of a hussar boot, garnished with spurs, announced that the cavalier was taking leave of his lady fair. Dufailli, who was somewhat impatient, rose abruptly from his seat, but his short sword getting between his legs, he fell, knocking down the screen, table, bottles, and glasses. "Excuse me, captain," he stammered out, whilst endeavouring to rise; "it was the fault of the wall."—"Oh, it is of no consequence," said the officer; who, although rather confused, very readily aided in lifting him up, whilst Pauline, Therèse, and their mother, were seized with a fit of irrepressible laughter. When Dufailli had recovered his feet, the captain departed; and, as the fall had produced no bruise nor wound, nothing checked our mirth. I shall throw a veil over the remaining scenes of this evening. We were in a place where Dufailli was well known, and my readers may guess the rest; suffice it to say, that, about one o'clock in the morning, I was buried in profound sleep, when I was suddenly awakened by a most tremendous uproar. Without suspecting the cause, I dressed myself in haste, and some cries of "Guard! guard! Murder! murder!" from the shrill

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lungs of mother Thomas, warned me that the danger was not far off. I was unarmed, and ran immediately to Dufailli's room, to ask for his tinder-box, of which I knew I should make a better use than he would. It was time, for our castle was invaded by five or six marines, who, sword in hand, were endeavouring to get our berths. These gentlemen were threatening, neither more nor less, than to force us to jump out of the windows; and, as they swore, besides, to put everything to fire and sword in the house, mother Thomas, with her squeaking pipe, was pealing the tocsin of alarm with a noise that aroused the whole neighbourhood. Although a man not easily frightened, I confess I felt a sensation of fear which I could not repress. The event, whatever it might be, would probably end seriously for me.

I was, however, determined to take a resolute part. Pauline earnestly besought me to shut myself up with her. "Fasten the bolt," said she; "I beseech you to fasten the bolt." But the garret in which we were was not impregnable. I might be blockaded; and preferred defending the approach to the place, rather than run the risk of being taken like a rat in a trap. In spite of Pauline's efforts to detain me, I attempted a sortie, and was soon engaged with the assailants. I darted amongst them from the end of a narrow gallery, and with so much impetuosity, that before they could recover themselves, upset, and thrust headlong from a ladder, by which they were attempting to gain an entrance, they were laid sprawling on the ground, bruised and wounded severely. Then Pauline, her sister, and Dufailli, to render the victory more decisive, flung upon them all that came to hand; chairs, tables, stools, and various et cæteras, to detail which would be tedious. At every missile that struck them, the enemy, prostrate on the pavement, cried out with pain and rage. In a moment the passage was filled. This nocturnal brawl could not fail to arouse all in the vicinity; and the night-guard, police agents, and patrol, entered

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the domicile of madame Thomas;—there must have been at least fifty men, all armed, and making a tremendous hubbub. Madame Thomas endeavoured to testify that her house was quite tranquil, but they would not hear her: and these words, some of which were pretty significant, reached our ears from the ground floor—"Take this woman off."—"Come, old ——, follow us; or shall we get a wheelbarrow to bundle you in, old duchess. Come, no nonsense." "Sweep off the whole party; take every one; seize their arms. I will teach you, you blackguards, to make a row." From these words, pronounced in a provincial accent, and mixed with occasional interjections, which, like the garlic and pepper, are fruits of his country, we learnt that adjutant Bevignac was at the head of the party. Dufailli had no inclination to get into his clutches; and, as for me, I had excellent reasons for wishing to escape. "The staircase—go up the staircase, and guard the passage," roared out Bevignac. But whilst he thus bellowed and vociferated, I had time to tie a sheet to the window-bar, and the obstacles which separated us from the armed force had not been removed, when Pauline, Therèse, Dufailli, and myself, were already out of reach. This threat, "Do not trouble yourselves—I will follow you," which we heard at a distance, only moved our laughter. The danger was over.

We consulted as to where we should pass the night. Therèse and Pauline proposed that we should quit the city, and make a pastoral excursion into the country. "No, no," said Dufailli; "let us go to the Silver Lion, to Boutrois;" and this was agreed on. M. Boutrois, although it was an untimely hour, opened his doors with much politeness. "Ah," said he to Dufailli, "I learnt that you had received your prize-money, and you are both right and welcome to pay us a visit. I have some admirable claret. What will the ladies please to take? A two-bedded room, I see." At the same time M. Boutrois, armed with a

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bunch of keys, and with a candle in his hand, led us to the room destined for us. "You will find yourselves quite at home here. No one will disturb you; where we purvey for the lieutenant of the marine, the commandant in chief, and the commissary-general of police, you know no one dares to interfere. Madame Boutrois now does not like a joke, so I shall take care and say that you are alone. Madame B. is a very good woman—a very good woman; but her manners, you see—her manners are very formal; and on this point she is strictness personified. Women here! If she had only the slightest suspicion of such a thing, she would think herself lost for ever; she has such an opinion of the sex in general! Oh, mon Dieu! must we not live with the living?—the jolly?—the vivacious? I am a philosopher myself, provided —mind, I say provided—that there is no ground for scandal; and suppose there were, why every one to his liking, as the elderly gentlewoman said when she embraced her cow; every person to his own way of thinking and doing; the only point being, that it does not offend or prejudice any one."

M. Boutrois treated us to a great many more equally brilliant aphorisms; after which he told us that he had a well-stocked cellar, all of which was at our service. "As for the boiler," he added, "that at the present hour has got rather cool, but your worships have only to order, and in a brace of seconds all shall be ready.' Dufailli ordered some claret, and a fire, although it was quite warm enough to have done without.

The claret was brought, five or six logs were cast on the fire, and an ample collation spread before us. Some cold poultry occupied the centre of the table, and formed the resisting point of an unprepared repast where all had been calculated for an enormous appetite. Dufailli desired that nothing should be wanting; and M. Boutrois, sure of being well paid, was most complying. Therèse and her sister de-

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voured all with their eyes, and I was not in a bad humour for commencing the attack and carrying on the war.

Whilst I was cutting up the fowl, Dufailli tasted the claret. "Delicious, delicious!" he repeated, smacking his lips, and then began to drink heartily; and scarcely had we began to eat, than an unconquerable drowsiness nailed him to his chair, when he snored away most comfortably until the dessert came in. He then woke, crying out, "The Devil—it blows hard—where am I? Does it freeze? I feel a sort of an all-overish-I-don't-know-how-ishness." "Oh," cried Pauline, who took me for a sapper of the guards, "his supper has not well digested."—"The papa's legs and back are asleep," said Therèse, in her turn, and opening a sort of sweetmeat box in which was some snuff, "Take a pinch, my venerable; that will clear your eyes." Dufailli took a pinch; and if I mention this circumstance, trifling in itself, it is because I have before neglected to say, that Pauline's sister was more than thirty, and from the simple fact that she took snuff like a lawyer or commissary's clerk, we may easily imagine that she was not in the freshness and bloom of youth and beauty.

However that may be, Dufailli made much of her. "I like the little thing," he said occasionally, "she is a good girl."—"Oh, that is nothing new," replied Therèse, "whenever a vessel anchors in our roads, I have gone through the scrutiny of all the crew; and I defy any sailor to say, 'black's the white of my eye.' When one knows how to behave as one should, one—" —"The wench says right," interrupted Dufailli. "I like her because she is open, and so I will give her a good turn."—"Ah, ah, ah," cried Pauline, laughing, and then addressing me, "And you, will you give me a similar turn?"

Thus ran on our conversation, when we heard, coming from the road leading to the harbour, a body of men, whose boots made a great noise as they walked.

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"Captain Paulet for ever!" they cried out, "Captain Paulet for ever!" The troop soon stopped in front of the hotel. "Hallo! father Boutrois, father Boutrois!" they roared out altogether. Some tried to force the door; others thumped with the knocker in a most energetic manner; some pulled the bell with incredible violence; and others threw stones at the shutters.

At this uproar I started, imagining that our asylum was to be again attacked; Pauline and her sister were not quite at ease; and at length somebody running hastily down stairs, four steps at a time, the door was opened, and there was a rush, as if the embankments of a ditch had given way. The torrent was headlong; a mixture of voices uttered sounds quite unintelligible to us. "Peter, Paul, Jenny, Eliza, house, everybody, wife, get up! By Jove, they sleep like dormice." One might have thought that the house was on fire. We soon heard doors opening and shutting; there was a noise of tables, an inconceivable uproar, a female servant who was bitterly complaining of indecent treatment, shouts of riotous laughter, and bottles rattling and breaking. Plates, dishes, and glass clashing together, and the winding up of the jack, added to the din; a chinking of money, oaths in English and French occasionally heard amidst this infernal clatter, all made the place a perfect bedlam broke loose. "By Jove it is joy, or I never heard it before," said Dufailli. "What are all these rejoicings for? What does it all mean? Have they captured the Spanish galleons? But this is not the track for them."

Dufailli cudgelled his brain to make out the cause of all the uproar, which was to me equally inexplicable, when M. Boutrois, with a radiant face, entered, to ask leave to light a fire. "You do not know," said he "that the 'Revanche' has just come into port. Our Paulet has been carrying on the war in his old way; is he not a fortunate fellow? A capture of three millions (francs) beneath the very cannon of Dover." —"Three millions!" cried Dufailli, "and I not

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there!"—"Do you hear that, sister? Three millions!" added Pauline, jumping like a young kid. "Three millions!" echoed Therèse, "I am delighted! We shall come in for a share!"—"Ah, woman, woman," interrupted Dufailli, "interest before all; you should rather think of your mother, who is perhaps at this moment in darkness and distress."—"Mother Thomas is an old ——" (what I will not sully my pages by repeating) added Therèse. "Come, that is neat, very neat," observed Boutrois, "for a daughter. 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long,' &c."—"I cannot swallow that three millions," said Dufailli. "Tell us, father Boutrois, all about it." Our host excused himself on the plea of business; "besides," he added, "I do not well know the particulars, and am in a great hurry."

The riot continued; I heard them ranging chairs, and the silence that followed betokened that their jaws were filled. As it was probable that there would be some suspension of these noises, I proposed that we should go to bed, which was agreed on; and as daybreak was near at hand, that we might not be disturbed by the light, and make up for lost time, we drew the curtains close.

However, we were not aroused so soon as I had anticipated: sailors eat fast and drink long. Songs, which shook the very glasses, at length disturbed our repose; forty discordant voices joining in the chorus of the celebrated hymn of Roland. "Devil take the singers?" cried Dufailli, "I had the most agreeable dream:—I was at Toulon: were you ever at Toulon, old fellow?" I answered Dufailli, that I knew Toulon, but could not see what relation there could be between his agreeable dream and that city. "I was a galley-slave," he replied, "and I had just escaped." Dufailli perceived that this statement made an unpleasant impression on me, which I could not conceal. "Well, what is the matter with you, countryman? I had just escaped, and that's no bad dream, I think, for a pri-

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sooner. It was only a dream, to be sure; but that is not all, for I entered amongst the corsairs, and got as much gold as I could carry."

Although I have never been superstitious, I must confess I took Dufailli's dream as a prediction on my future lot; it was perhaps a warning from heaven, to determine the course I should pursue. However, said I to myself, at present I do not deserve heaven's interposition, and perhaps I only fancy it. I soon made another reflection. It occurred to me, that the old serjeant might have been venting his suspicions of me, and the idea vexed me. I rose; and Dufailli saw that I had an air more serious than usual; "What ails you?" said he, "why, you look as moping as an owl."—"Has anybody sold you pease which you cannot boil?" asked Pauline, taking me by the arm, and swinging me round to disturb my reverie. "Is he in the doldrums?" inquired Therese. "Hold your tongue," replied Dufailli, "and speak when you have leave to do so; in the mean time, sleep sluts, sleep, and do not move till we return."

He then beckoned me to follow him; and in obeying he conducted me to a little parlour, where we found captain Paulet and his crew, the majority of whom were drunk with wine and joy. As soon as we appeared, there was an unanimous shout of "Dufailli! Dufailli!"—"Hail to mine ancient!" said Paulet; and then offering my companion a seat beside him, added, "Anchor here my old cock, we may well say that Providence is good. M. Boutrois, Boutrois, bring more 'bishops,' as if it rained wine. Come, we will have no sorrow here, from this time henceforward," he added, pressing Dufailli's hand. Paulet then looked attentively at me, and said, "I think I know you, we have met before; you have handled a marline-spike, my hearty."

I told him that I had been on board the privateer, "Barras," but that I did not recollect having ever met him before. "Well, then, we will make acquaintance now. I do not know," he added, "but you look like

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a jolly dog—a lad for all sorts of weathers, as we say. I say, my boys, has he not the look of a hearty chap? I like the cut of his jib. Sit here, on my right hand; by my fist, what a back and loins; here are shoulders! You are just the lad for fishing for Englishmen." On finishing these words, he put on my head his red cap. "It does not look amiss on the lad," he added, with a knowing look, but in which there was much kindness.

I saw at once that the captain would not be sorry to number me amongst his crew. Dufailli, who had not yet become speechless, exhorted me most energetically to profit by the opportunity; this was the good advice he had promised me, and I followed it. It was agreed that I should go a voyage, and that the next day I should go to the owner, M. Choisnard, who would advance me some money.

It must not be doubted but that I was well received by my new comrades; the captain had placed a thousand crowns to their credit at the hotel, and many of them had other resources in the city. I never witnessed such profusion. Nothing was too dear or delicate for the privateers. M. Boutrois, to satisfy them, was compelled to put the whole city and environs in requisition, and even despatched couriers to nourish their luxurious palates, the duration of which was not limited to a single day. It was on Monday, and my companion was not sobered by the following Sunday; as for me, my stomach and head agreed delightfully, and neither received the slightest check.

Dufailli had forgotten his promise to the ladies, and I reminded him of it; and quitting our party for a moment, I returned to them, presuming that they were growing impatient at our absence. Pauline was alone, her sister had gone to learn what was become of their mother; she soon returned, and throwing herself on the bed, she exclaimed with an air of despair, "We are undone for ever."—"What is the matter?" I asked. "We are lost," she answered, with her face bathed in tears. "Two men have been carried to the hospital

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with broken ribs, a guard has been wounded, and the commandant has ordered the house to be shut up. What will become of us? where can we find a home?"

"A home," said I, "you shall always find; but where is your mother?" Therèse answered that her mother was first led to the guard-house, and afterwards to the city prison, and the report was that she would not very easily get out again.

This information gave me some uneasiness: mother Thomas would be questioned, and perhaps had already been examined at the police office, or by the commissary-general; and she doubtless had mentioned, or would mention, Dufailli's name; and if he were questioned I should be so also. It was important to prevent this; I returned with haste to concert with the serjeant the measures necessary to be pursued. Fortunately, he was not so far gone as not to hear reason. I talked only of the danger which threatened him; he understood me, and taking twenty guineas from his pocket, "Here," said he, "is wherewithal to stop mother Thomas's blabbing tongue;" and then calling a waiter to him, he gave him the money, desiring him to carry it forthwith to the prisoner. "He is the jailor's son," said Dufailli, "and has admittance everywhere; and, moreover, is a close and discreet lad."

Our messenger returned quickly, and told us that mother Thomas, though twice examined, had mentioned no names, and had received the bribe with gratitude; vowing that she was determined, if she died for it, to say nothing that could injure us; and thus I was assured that I had nothing to fear on this head. "And as to the wenches, what must we do with them?" said I to Dufailli. "Oh, we must export them to Dunkirk, and I will pay the expenses," he replied; and we then returned to prepare them for their departure. At first they appeared astonished; but after some arguments, proving that it was the best method they could adopt, and that there was danger in remaining longer at Boulogne, they resolved to leave us. The next day we

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started them off, and the parting did not cost us much pain. Dufailli had put them well in cash, and we hoped for future meetings, &c. In fact, we did meet again at a later period, in a certain house kept by a namesake of the celebrated Jean-Bart, a female descendant of whom, in the bosom of his very country, consecrated herself to the pleasures of the rivals of her great ancestor.

Mother Thomas recovered her liberty after six months' confinement; Pauline and her sister then returning to the maternal bosom, though torn from their native soil, renewed the courses of their former lives. I know not whether they made a fortune; it is not impossible. But for want of accurate information, I here end their history, and resume my own.

Paulet and his crew had scarcely noticed our absence before we rejoined them; we sang, drank, and eat alternately without stirring, until midnight; thus confounding all repasts in one lengthened meal. Paulet and Fleuriot, his second in command, were the heroes of the feast; physically, as well as morally, they were the perfect antipodes of each other. The former was a stout short man, strong backed, square set, with a neck like a bull; wide shoulders, a full face, and his features like that of a lion, his aspect either fierce or gentle; in fight he was pitiless, elsewhere he was humane and compassionate. At the moment of boarding he was a perfect demon; in the bosom of his family, and with his wife and children, except a little roughness of manner, he was as mild as a dove; then he was the jolly, simple, bluff, and rough farmer; a perfect patriarch, whom it was impossible to discern in the pirate. Once on shipboard, his manners and language entirely changed, and he became harsh and coarse to excess; his will was as despotic as that of an oriental pasha; abrupt and rude, he had an iron arm and will and woe to him who opposed either. Paulet was a daring and good man, sensible though brutal; no one ever possessed more frankness and loyalty.

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Paulet's lieutenant was one of the most singular beings I ever met with: endowed with a most robust constitution, although yet very young, he had tried it with every sort of excess; he was one of those libertines who, by dint of anticipating the pleasures of life's stores, spends his revenue before he gets it, eats his calf in the cow's belly. Headstrong, with vivid passions and a heated imagination, he had early abandoned himself to premature excesses. He had not reached his twentieth year, when the decay of his lungs, together with an universal sinking of his whole frame, had compelled him to quit the artillery, into which he had entered at eighteen years of age, and now this poor fellow had scarcely a breath of life in him; he was frightfully thin; two large eyes, whose blackness made more apparent the melancholy paleness of his complexion, were apparently all that remained of this carcass, in which, however, was a soul of fire. Fleuriot was not ignorant that his days were numbered. The most able physicians had pronounced his sentence of death, and the certainty of his approaching dissolution had suggested to him a strange resolution. This is what he told me upon the subject: "I served," said he, "in the fifth regiment of light artillery, where I was entered as a volunteer. The regiment was quartered at Metz. A gay life and hard work had exhausted me, and I was as dry as parchment. One morning the turn-out was sounded, and we set off. I fell sick by the way, and received an hospital order; and a few days afterwards, the doctors, seeing that I spit blood abundantly, declared that my lungs were not in a state to be subjected to the exercise of a horse, and consequently I was advised to enter the foot artillery; and scarcely was I well when I did so. I left one berth for another, the small for the large, the six for twelve, the spur for the spatterdash. I had no longer to gallop hard, but I had to turn my body about on the platform; to jump up and down like a goat, to roll gun-carriages about, to dig trenches, to strap up artillery

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geer, and, worse than that, to carry on my back the infernal knapsack, that eternal calf's skin which has killed more conscripts than the guns of Marengo. The calf's skin gave me a knock-down blow. I could not resist its attack. I offered myself to the depot, and was admitted. I had only to undergo the inspection of the general. He was that martinet Sarrazin. He came to me. 'I will wager that he is still weak-chested: are you not?' 'Consumption in the second degree,' replied the major. 'Is it so? I thought it. I said so. They are all narrow-shouldered, hollow-chested, lanky limbed, thick visaged. Show your legs. Why there are four campaigns in them yet,' continued the general, striking me on the calf. 'And now what would you? Your dismissal? You shan't have it. Besides,' he added, 'death only comes to him who pauses: go your way.' I wished to speak. 'Begone,' repeated the general, 'and be silent.'

"The inspection concluded; I went and threw myself on my camp-bed, and whilst I reclined on my four-feet-long mattress, reflecting on the harshness of the general, it occurred to me that I might find him more tractable if I were recommended by one of his brother officers. My father had been intimate with general Legrand, who was then at the camp at Ambleteuse, and I thought I might find a protector in him. I saw him, and he welcomed me as the son of an old friend, gave me a letter to Sarrazin, and sent one of his aide-de-camps to attend me. The recommendation was pressing, and I made sure of success. We arrived at the camp, and making for the general's abode, a soldier pointed it out to us, and we found ourselves at the gate of a dilapidated barrack, which bore no marks of being a general's residence; no sentinel, no inscription, no centry-box. I knocked with my sabre-hilt, and a voice cried 'Enter,' with the accent and tone of displeasure. A packthread, which I pulled, drew up a wooden latch, and the first object that met our eyes on penetrating this asylum, was a woollen covering, under

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which, lying side by side on the straw, were the general and his negro. In this posture he gave us audience. Sarrazin took the letter, and having read it, without changing his position, he said to the aide-de-camp: 'General Legrand takes an interest in this young man. Well, what would he have? that I put him on half-pay? Oh! he cannot think of such a thing.' Then addressing me—'How much fatter should you be, if I put you on half-pay? Oh, you have a fine prospect at home: if you are rich, to die gradually with over-nursing; if you are poor, to increase the misery of your parents, and finish your days in an hospital. I am a doctor for you: and my prescription is a bullet, and then your cure will follow; if you escape that, the knapsack will do for you, or marching and exercise will put you to rights; these are additional chances. Besides, do as I do, drink tar-water: that is worth all your jalaps, and gruels, and messes.' At the same time, he stretched out his arm, he seized a large pitcher, which was near him, and filled a can, which he offered to me, and all refusal was in vain. I was compelled to swallow some of the nauseous stuff, as was also the aide-de-camp; the general drank after us, and his negro, to whom he handed the can, finished what was left.

"There was then no hope of his recalling the decision against which I had appealed, and we withdrew greatly discontented. The aide-de-camp returned to Ambleteuse and I to Fort Chatillon, which I entered more dead than alive. From this moment I became the prey to an apathetic sadness, which absorbed all my faculties: I then obtained an exemption from service: night and day I remained on my couch, indifferent to all around me; and I think I should have remained in that position till now, if one winter's night the English had not determined to burn our flotilla. An inconceivable fatigue, although I did nothing, seizing on my senses, had induced a profound sleep. Suddenly I was aroused by the report of cannon. I arose, and

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through the panes of my window, I saw a thousand fires crossing each other in the air. On one side were immense trains of fire like rainbows; on the other side were vast stars, which seemed to grow larger and redder, and my first idea was that I saw fireworks. At length a noise like that of torrents, which precipitate themselves in cascades from the tops of rocks, gave me a sort of shuddering feeling: at intervals darkness usurped the place of the ruddy light, which I can only compare to daylight in hell. The very earth seemed scorched by it. I was already agitated by fever, and I thought my head was swelling larger and larger. The muster-call was beaten, I heard the cry 'To arms!' and on the ground the trampling of horses' feet. Terror seized me, and delirium possessed me. I got my boots, and tried to pull them on; it was impossible; they were too tight, my legs were entangled in them; I tried to pull them off again; I could not. During my exertions each moment increased my fears, all my comrades were dressed; the silence which reigned about me warned me that I was alone, and whilst, from all parts, persons were running together, without thinking of the inconvenience of my boots, I fled with haste across the country, carrying my clothes under my arms.

"Next day I reappeared amidst all the people whom I found living. Ashamed of a cowardice at which I was myself astonished, I had trumped up a story, which, if I could ensure belief, would have given me the reputation of a hero. Unfortunately the tale was not swallowed so easily as I could have desired; no one was the dupe of my lies: sarcasms and rude jokes without end were thrown out, until I almost burst with spite and rage; in any other circumstances I would have fought the whole regiment, but I was in a state of weakness, from which I did not rouse till the following night, when I recovered a little of my wonted energy.

"The English had again commenced the bombardment of the city, and were so close to the shore, that we could even hear their voices, and the balls of the thousand

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cannons on the coast passed over their heads. Movable batteries were then erected, which, to approach them as closely as possible, floated according to the ebb and flow of the tide. I was ordered to the command of a twelve-pounder, which having stationed at the extremity of the rafts, we anchored. At that very moment, a shower of bullets were directed at us: our howitzers were observed under the waggons, and amongst the horses. It was evident that in spite of the obscurity of the night, we had become an object of aim to the enemy. We were about to return the compliment, and had altered the level of our gun, when my corporal, almost as much alarmed as I had been the previous evening, desirous of seeing if the trunnions had got loose in shifting the gun, placed his hand on them, and suddenly uttered a piercing shriek which was re-echoed all along the bank. His fingers were crushed beneath twenty hundred weight of metal. He attempted to disengage them, but the incumbent mass only pressed the more heavily, and he was still held fast, and when enabled to disengage himself he fainted. A dram of brandy revived him, and I offered to lead him to the camp, which was no doubt set down as a pretext for absenting myself.

"The corporal and I walked away together; but at the moment of entering the artillery warren, which we had to cross, a burning hand grenade fell between two chests filled with powder. The danger was imminent, and in a few seconds the whole ammunition would have blown up. By running away I could have escaped safely, but a change came over me, and death was no longer fearful. Quicker than lightning I seized on the metal tube whence brimstone and fiery matter were escaping, and attempted to extinguish the flame; but this being impossible, I carried it in my hand, blazing as it was, to a distance; and the instant I threw it on the earth, it burst with a violence that shivered the metal to pieces.

"There was a witness of this deed; my hands, my face, my burnt garments, the sides of the powder

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boxes already blackened with fire, all testified my courage. I might have been proud, but I was only satisfied: my companions would henceforward have no right to taunt me with their offensive jokes. We went onwards, and scarcely had we advanced a single step, when the whole atmosphere seemed one blaze of fire; the flames appeared in seven places at once, and the brilliant and horrible light seemed at the harbour: the slates cracked, whilst the roofs were burning, and we thought we heard the report of musquetry. Some detachments, deceived by this, scoured about to discover the enemy. Nearer to us, at a short distance from the ship building yard, clouds of smoke and flame rose from a thatch, whence the burning straw was driven in all directions by the wind. We heard a cry of distress—the voice of a child—which struck to my heart; it was perhaps too late, but I determined to attempt its rescue, and succeeded in restoring the infant to its mother, who, having left it for an instant, was returning to it in an agony of distress.

"My honour was now redeemed, and cowardice could no longer be charged upon me. I returned to the battery, when every person congratulated me. A chief of a battalion promised me a cross, which, he had, however, been unable to procure for himself for forty years, because he had always had the bad luck to get behind, and never in front of, the cannon. I was now in a fair way of getting renown, and opportunities presented perpetually. There were mediators appointed between England and France to negotiate for peace. Lord Lauderdale was in Paris as plenipotentiary, when the telegraph announced the bombardment of Boulogne, which was but the second act to the attack of Copenhagen. At this information, the emperor, indignant at a causeless renewal of hostilities, sent for lord L., reproached him with the perfidy of his cabinet, and ordered him to quit France instantly. A fortnight afterwards, lord Lauderdale arrived here at the *Canon d'Or*. He was an Englishman, and the exasperated

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people were desirous of revenging themselves on him: they surrounded him, mobbed him, and pressed upon him; and in defiance of the protection of two officers who were attending him, they showered stones and mud upon him from all sides. Pale, trembling, and faltering, the peer thought he was about to fall a sacrifice, when, sword in hand, I cleared my way through the rabble, crying, 'Destruction to whoever strikes him!' I harangued the multitude, dispersed them, and led the way to the harbour, where, without being subjected to further insult, he embarked on board a flag-of-truce-boat. He soon reached the English squadron, which the next evening renewed the bombardment. The following night we were again on the shore, and at one o'clock the English, after throwing a few Congreve rockets, suspended their firing; and I, worn out with toil, threw myself on a gun-carriage, and slept soundly. I know not how long my sleep lasted, but when I awoke I was up to my neck in water, my blood was frozen, my limbs stiffened, and my sight and memory bewildered. Boulogne had changed its situation, and I took the fire of the flotilla for that of the enemy. It was the commencement of a lengthened malady, during which I obstinately refused to go to the hospital. At length I was convalescent; but as I only recovered slowly, I was again named for the half-pay, and this time was reduced against my own wish; for I had now adopted the opinion of general Sarrazin.

"I had no longer any wish to die in my bed, and applying to myself the sense of the words, 'There is only death for him that pauses,'—that I might not pause, I commenced a career in which, without too painful labours, there is a never-ceasing activity requisite. Persuaded that I have but a short time to live, I am determined to employ that time. I have turned privateer, and what risk do I run? I can but be killed, and have but little to lose; in the mean while I want for nothing, emotions of every sort; perils and pleasures; and now I never *pause*."

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The reader will now judge what sort of men were captain Paulet and his lieutenant. Scarcely had this latter a breath left in his body, and yet in fight, as everywhere else, he was the leader. Sometimes he was lost in dull thought, whence he roughly aroused himself, his head giving the impetus to his system, and he evinced a turbulence which was restrained by no bounds. There was no extravagance, no wild sally of which he was not capable; and in this reckless state of excitation, all was dared by him. He would have scaled heaven itself. I cannot tell all the pranks he played at the first banquet to which Dufailli had presented me. Sometimes he proposed one scheme, sometimes another; at length he bethought him of the theatre. "What do they play to night?"—"'Misanthropy and Repentance.'"* "I prefer the 'Two Brothers.' Comrades! which of you is in a snivelling mood? The captain weeps every year at his festival, we fellows know nothing of such joys. They are confined to the fathers of families. Do you ever go to the play, Captain? You should go; for there will be all the world there. All the fashionables, shrimp girls in silken gowns; the nobility of the land. Oh God! heaven itself is struck to see sows in ruffles. Never mind; these ladies must have their play, though it would be as well if they understood French. Oh, do go and see them. I remember some ladies at the last ball, who being asked to dance, answered, 'I'm axed already.'"—"Come, come, will you never hold your gabble?" said Paulet to his lieutenant, whom none of the men had interrupted. "Captain," he replied, "I have made a motion, and no one has answered me; nobody wants to snivel. Well, good bye; I will go and blubber alone."

Fleuriot immediately went out, and the captain then commenced his eulogy. "He has," said he, "a burning brain, but for courage he is not equalled by

* The "Stranger" of the English Stage.—*Translator.*

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any man under heaven." He then informed us how he was indebted to the daring of Fleuriot for the capture he had just made. The recital was animated and well told, in spite of Paulet's manner, who had a strange way of pronunciation, and who informed us that he had knocked out the brains of a dozen Englishmen with a hand-spike. The evening advanced, and Paulet, who had not seen his wife and children, was about to retire, when Fleuriot returned. He was not alone. "Captain," said he, entering, "what think you of this agreeable sailor I have just engaged? I think that red cap was never placed over a prettier countenance."—"True," replied Paulet, "but is it a cabin-boy you have brought us? He has no beard. Parbleu!" he added, raising his voice, "it is a woman!" Then continuing, with more strongly expressed astonishment, "If I am not mistaken, it is the Saint——"*—"Yes," replied Fleuriot, "it is Eliza, the amiable and better half of the manager of the company which now enchants Boulogne; she has come to congratulate us upon our late good fortune."—"Madame amongst privateers!" said the captain, casting on the disguised actress a look of contempt but too expressive of his thoughts. "I compliment her taste; she will hear agreeable conversation; the devil must possess her! A woman, too!"—"Come, come, captain," cried Fleuriot, "privateers are not cannibals, they will not eat her up. Besides, you know the old ditty:

'She loves a laugh; she loves a glass;
'She loves a song; a jolly lass.'

What harm is there in it?"—"None; only the season is propitious for a cruise; my crew are all well, and we were in no want of madame to improve their health."

* The name had nearly escaped my pen; but the husband of the lady in question has been for some time manager of one of our theatres in the capital. He is living, and my discretion will be commended.

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At these words, significantly uttered, Eliza cast her eyes on the ground. "My dear girl, do not blush," said Fleuriot, "the captain is only jesting."—"Not I, by Neptune; I never jest. I remember the Saint Napoleon, when the whole staff, beginning with marshal Brune, was in commotion; there was no small battling in that day: madame knows all about it, the how, the when, the why, and the wherefore, and will not wish me to be more explicit."

Eliza, humbled by this language, did not repent however of having accompanied Fleuriot; during her agitation, she attempted to justify her appearance at the "Lion d'Argent" with that softness of tone, those insinuating manners, that mildness of countenance, which seem so foreign to licentious behaviour; she talked of admiration, glory, valour, heroism, &c., that she might make way in Paulet's estimation; she appealed to his gallantry, and called him a "chevalier Français." Flattery has more or less influence over every mind, and Paulet's language became more polished; he excused himself as well as possible, obtained Eliza's pardon, and took leave of his comrades, recommending them to amuse themselves, though there was no fear of growing dull. As for me, I could not keep my eyes open, and I went to my bed, where I heard and saw nothing. Next day I arose, recruited and in spirits, and Fleuriot took me to the owner, who, on the strength of my appearance, advanced me a few five-franc pieces. A week afterwards, seven of our comrades were in the hospital. The name of the actress, Saint——, had disappeared from the play-bill, and we learnt that she had profited by the offer of part of a post-chaise belonging to a colonel, who, tormented by a thirst of gaming even to the risking the very epaulets of his uniform, had gone off express to Paris.

I awaited with anxiety the moment of our embarkation. The five-franc pieces of M. Choisnard were spent, and if they allowed me to live, they

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scarcely permitted me to cut any figure; besides, on shore I daily ran the risk of some unpleasant rencontre. Boulogne was infested with a great many bad fellows: Mansui, Tribout, Salé, were carrying on their trade in the port, where they despoiled the conscripts, under the orders of another thief named Canivet, who, in the face of the army and its commander, ventured to call himself the Decapitator (bourreau des crânes.) I think I still see the legend on his police-cap, where were depicted a death's head, swords, and thigh-bones crossed. Canivet was the collector, or rather lord-paramount, and had a large number of sub-agents, cabin-boys, and petty fellows who payed him a tax for the privilege of thieving: he watched them incessantly, and if he suspected them of deceiving him, he generally chastised them with his sword. I thought it likely that in this gang there might be some fugitive from the gallies, and I feared recognition. My apprehensions were the better founded, as I had heard a report that many freed galley slaves had been placed either in the corps of sappers, or that of the military workmen in the fleet.

For some time nothing was talked of but murders, assassinations, robberies; and all those crimes were evidences of the presence of hardened villains, amongst whom, perchance, might be some with whom I had compulsorily associated when at Toulon. It was absolutely necessary to avoid them: for to come again in contact would have given me much trouble, from the difficulty of not compromising myself. Robbers are like women; when we would escape their vices and their society, all league against us to prevent it; all seek to retain the comrade who would fly from evil; and it is a glory for them to keep him in the abject state whence they themselves wish not to be emancipated, nor would allow others to escape. I recalled to mind the comrades who denounced me at Lyons, and the motives that induced them to have me apprehended. As my experience was fresh, I was

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very naturally inclined to profit by it, and be on my guard; and consequently went into the streets as seldom as possible, and passed nearly all my time in the lower town, at madame Henri's, where the privateers boarded, and were accommodated with credit on the strength of their respective prizes. Madame Henri, supposing she had ever been a wife, was now a good-looking widow, and still attractive, though she owned to thirty-six: she had two charming girls, who, without forgetting themselves, yet gave hopes to every jolly lad whom fortune favoured. Whoever spent his money in the house was a welcome guest, and he who squandered most was always first in estimation with the mother and daughters as long as his profusion lasted. The hand of these girls had been promised twenty times; twenty times had they been betrothed, and yet their reputation for virtue had never been blown upon. They were free in conversation, but reserved in manners; and although their purity of mind was not unsullied, yet no one could boast of having induced them to commit a faux-pas. Yet how many naval heroes had been subdued by the power of their charms! How many aspirants, deceived by their unmeaning coquetries, had flattered themselves on a predilection which was to lead them to so much bliss! And then, how could one not be mistaken as to the real sentiments of these chaste Dianas, whose perpetual amability seemed to give the preference to the person last looked upon? The hero of to-day was feasted, fondled; a thousand little attentions were evinced, certain little peculiar privileges permitted,—a kiss, for instance, on the sly; a seducing glance of the eye: economical advice was freely bestowed, whilst seeking to procure something extravagant; they regulated the expenditure of his money, and as funds grew low, which was a matter of course, they learned the fact of approaching penury by the well-timed proffer of a temporary loan; it was rarely refused, and without evincing indifference or disgust,

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they only expected that necessity and love would send the inamorato to seek new perils. But scarcely was the wind in the sail of the ship of the lover, and he was calculating the happy chances which would ultimately lead to a marriage, and the small loan which he had vowed to return an hundred fold, when already was his place filled by some other fortunate mortal; so that in madame Henri's house the lovers were constantly succeeding each other, and her two girls were like two citadels, which, always besieged, and always on the point of surrender in appearance, yet never yielded. When one raised the siege, another attacked the spot; there was illusion for all, and nothing but illusion. Cecile, one of madame Henri's daughters, had passed her twentieth year; she was a merry one, a great laugher, and would listen without blushing to the broadest joke; and denied only the final surrender of the fort. Hortense, her sister, was much like her, only younger, and her character more natural; she sometimes said strange things; but it seemed as if honey and orange-flower water flowed in the veins of these two females, for they were so mild and gentle on all occasions. There was no inflammable material in their hearts, although they showed no repugnance to a pressing proposal, and evinced no astonishment at the familiarity of a sailor; yet be it said, they did not the less deserve the surname bestowed on the shepherdess of Vaucouleurs, as well as on a little town of Picardy.

It was at the fire-side of this amiable family that I seated myself for a month, with a constancy that astonished myself, dividing my hours between piquet, cribbage, and mild ale. The inactivity of my life was irksome, but at last it ceased: Paulet was desirous of resuming his cruise, and we set sail; but the nights were not dark enough, and the days had become too long. All our captures were limited to a few poor coal-brigs, and a sloop of no value; on board which we found lord Somebody, who, in the hopes of regain-

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ing his appetite, had undertaken a sea voyage, accompanied by his cook. He was sent to spend his money and eat his trout at Verdun.

The dull season was at hand, and we had as yet made no prizes. The captain was as moody and dull as a country whipping-post. Fleuriot was entirely out of patience, swore and raved from morning till night, and from night till morning was in a tempest of rage; all the crew were quite out of sorts, (to use a vulgar expression,) and I think we were all in a humour which would have led us on to attack a first-rate man-of-war. It was midnight, and we had just left a small bay near Dunkirk, and were steering towards the English coast, when, by the light of the moon, which, bursting forth from the thick clouds, cast her brilliant rays on the waves, at a short distance we saw a sail. It was a brig of war which was ploughing the glittering wave. Paulet instantly discerned it. "My lads, he cried, "it is our own; every man lie down on his face and I will answer for our success." In an instant we boarded her. The English crew fought bravely, and a bloody struggle ensued on the deck. Fleuriot, who according to custom was the first to board, fell amongst the number of the dead. Paulet was wounded, but was avenged: and well avenged his lieutenant also. He struck down all who faced him, and never did I witness such a scene of slaughter. In less than ten minutes we were masters of the ship, and the tri-coloured flag was hoisted in the place of the red flag. Twelve of our crew had fallen in the action, in which an equal desperation was testified on both sides.

Amongst those who fell was one Lebel, whose resemblance to me was so striking, that it daily caused the most singular mistakes. I called to mind that my "Sosia" had regular credentials, and it occurred to me that I should do wrong to let slip so favourable an opportunity. Lebel had become food for the fishes, and consequently had no farther need of a passport, which would stand me in the greatest stead.

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The idea appeared to me admirable. I only had one cause of fear, which was that Lebel might have left his pocket-book with the owner of the privateer. I was overjoyed at discovering it about his person, and immediately took possession of it without being discovered by any person; and when they threw into the sea the sacks of sand in which the dead bodies were put that they might the more readily sink, I felt myself lightened of a great weight, thinking that at length I had got rid of that Vidocq who had played me so many scurvy tricks.

However, I was not completely assured, for Dufailli, who was our master-at-arms, knew my name. This circumstance annoyed me; and that I might have nothing to dread from him, I determined to let him into my secret by some pretended confidence. My precaution was useless. I called for Dufailli and sought him in every part of the vessel, but found him not; I went on board the "Revanche" and looked for him, called to him, but no answer was given; I went down to the powder room, but no Dufailli. What could have become of him? I went to the spirit room; near a barrel of gin and some bottles I saw an extended body; it was he. I shook him, turned him on his back—he was breathless—livid—dead.

Such was the end of my protector: a congestion of the brain, a sudden apoplexy, or instantaneous choking caused by intoxication, had terminated his career. Since the first creation of marine serjeants, never was there one who got drunk with such consistent regularity and unremitting perseverance. A single trait characterised him, and this prince of drunkards related the circumstance as the most delightful event of his life. It occurred on Twelfth-day. Dufailli had drawn king; and to honour his royalty, his comrades seated him on a handbarrow borne by four gunners. On each side of him were placed bottles of brandy for distribution; and elevated on this temporary palanquin, Dufailli made a halt before every booth in the camp, where he drank, and made others drink, amidst overwhelming

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shouts. These rejoicings were so often repeated, that at last his head became giddy; and his ephemeral majesty, introduced to a public-house, swallowed, without scarcely tasting it, a pound of bacon which he mistook for Gruyère cheese. The meat was indigestible; and Dufailli, conducted back to his barrack, threw himself on his bed, when he soon began to experience a most violent convulsion of the stomach, and in vain did he strive to repress the event that followed. The crisis over, he fell asleep, and was only awakened from his lethargic stupor by the growling of a dog and the noise of a cat, who were quarrelling in his room! O dignity of human nature, where wert thou? Such was the lesson of temperance which the Spartans gave their children, by making their slaves drunken, and then pointing out the effect of their excesses to them.

I have delayed an instant, to give the last and finishing touch to my fellow-countryman. He is no more. Peace be to his manes! Returned on board the brig, where Paulet had left me with the captain of the prize and five men of the crew of the "Revanche," scarcely had we closed the hatchways on our prisoners, than we begun coasting our way into Boulogne: but the report of the cannon fired by the English before we had boarded had summoned one of their frigates, which bore down upon us crowding all sail; and was soon so near that several shots passed over us, and we were pursued as far as Calais, when the swell of the sea becoming very great, and a stormy wind blowing on shore, we thought she would sheer off for fear of getting amongst the breakers; but she was no longer under control, and driven towards land had to contend at once with all the violence of the elements. To run aground was her only chance of safety, but that was not attempted. In a moment the frigate was impelled beneath the cross fires of the Batteries de la Côte de Fer, of the jetty, and of Fort Rouge; and from every quarter there came a shower of bombs, chain-shot, and grape. Amidst the horrible noise of a thousand shots, a cry

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of distress was heard, and the frigate sank without any possibility of succour being afforded.

An hour afterwards it was daylight; and in the distance we saw several fragments floating. A man and woman were tied to a mast, and waved a handkerchief, which we saw just as we were doubling Cape Grenet. I thought we could rescue these unfortunate beings, and proposed the attempt to the commander of the prize; and on his refusal to allow us the use of the jolly-boat, in a rage, I threatened to break his skull. "Well," said he, with a disdainful smile, and shrugging his shoulders, "captain Paulet is more humane than you; he has seen them, but does not stir about it because it is useless. They are there, and we are here, and every one for himself in bad weather; we have suffered quite loss enough, if it were only Fleuriot."

This answer restored me to my natural coolness, and made me understand that we ourselves were in greater danger than I had imagined. In fact, the waves evinced it; over our heads were gulls and divers, mingling their piercing cries with the shrill whistling of the north wind; in the horizon, darkening more and more, were long black and red streaks; the face of heaven was disfigured, and all betokened the impending tempest. Fortunately, Paulet had skilfully calculated time and distance; we failed in reaching Boulogne harbour, but found shelter and anchorage at Portel, not far from thence. On going ashore here, we saw lying on the strand the two unfortunates whom I would have succoured; the flow of the tide had cast them lifeless on a foreign shore, on which we gave them burial. They had been lovers, perhaps, and I was touched at their fate; but other cares diminished my regrets. All the population of the village, women, children, and old men, were assembled on the coast. The families of a hundred and fifty fishermen were in despair at seeing their frail barks fired upon by six English ships of the line, whose solid hulks were furrowing the waves. Each spectator, with an anxiety more easily imagined

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than described, followed with his eyes the bark in which he was most interested, and, according as it was sunk or escaped from peril, were cries, tears, lamentations, or transports of rapturous joy evinced. Mothers, daughters, wives, and children tore their hair, rent their clothes, threw themselves on the earth, uttering imprecations and blasphemies. Others, without reflecting how much they insulted distress, without thinking of rendering thanks to heaven, towards which their suppliant hands had been raised the instant before, danced, sung, and, with faces shining through forgotten tears, manifested every symptom of the most overpowering joy. Fervent vows, the patronage of Saint Nicholas, the efficacy of his intercession, all was forgotten. Perhaps, next day, recollection might have returned, and a little more compassion been evinced for a suffering neighbour; but during the storm egotism was paramount; and, as I was answered, "every one for himself."

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CHAPTER XX.

I am admitted into the marine artillery—I become a corporal—Seven prisoners of war—Secret societies of the army—"The Olympians"—Singular duels—Meeting with a galley-slave—The Count de L——, a political spy—He disappears—The incendiary—I am promised promotion—I am betrayed—Once more in prison—Disbanding of the armée de la Lune—The pardoned soldier—A companion is sentenced to be shot—The Piedmontese bandit—The camp fortune-teller—Four murderers set at liberty.

I RETURNED to Boulogne the same evening; where I learnt that, in consequence of an order from the general in command, all the individuals who, in each corps, were marked as black sheep, were to be immediately arrested, and sent on board the cruisers. It was a sort of press which was intended to purge the army, and to check its demoralization, which had increased to an alarming extent. Thus I judged it best to quit the "Revanche," on board which, to repair the losses of the late fight, the owner did not fail to send some of the men whom the general had deemed it expedient to get rid of. Since Canivet and his myrmidons were no longer in the camp, I thought there could be no ill result if I again turned soldier. Furnished with Lebel's papers, I entered a company of gunners, then employed in coast service; and as Lebel had formerly been a corporal in this division, I obtained that rank on the first vacancy; that is, a fortnight after my enrolment. Regular behaviour, and a perfect knowledge of my duties, with which I was well acquainted, as an artillery-man of the old school, soon acquired for me the favour of my officers; and a circumstance which might have gone greatly against me, still farther conciliated them towards me.

I was on guard at the fort of Eure, during the spring-tides, and the weather was excesively bad;

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mountains of water were dashed over the platform with so much violence, that the thirty-six pounders were shaken from the embrasures, and, at the dash of every wave, it seemed as if the whole fort was rent to pieces. Until the channel should be calmer, it was evident that no ship would dare to venture out; and night having come on, I did not station sentinels, but allowed the soldiers to remain in bed until next day. I watched for them, or rather I could not sleep, as I had no need of repose; when, about three in the morning, some words, which I knew to be English, struck on my ear; at the same time a knocking commenced at a door under the steps, leading to the battery. I thought we were surprised, and immediately roused everybody. I put them under arms, and had already determined on selling my life dearly, when I heard a woman's voice, who supplicated our aid. I soon heard distinctly these words in French: "Open, we have been shipwrecked!" I wavered an instant, and then with due precaution and a determination to sacrifice the first who on entering should betray any hostile intent, I opened the door and saw a woman, an infant, and five sailors, all more dead than alive. My first care was to have them all placed before a roaring fire, for they were dripping with wet and almost motionless from cold. My men and I lent them shirts and clothing; and as soon as they were a little revived, they told us the accident to which their visit to us was attributable. Having sailed for the Havannah, in a three-masted vessel, and on the point of finishing a prosperous voyage, they had dashed upon the mole of our pier, and only escaped death by throwing themselves on our battery from the main-top. Nineteen of their crew, amongst whom was the captain, had perished in the waves.

The sea still blockaded us for several days, without any boat daring to venture out to us. At the end of the time, I was rowed on shore with my wrecked sailors, whom I conducted myself to the chief officer

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of the naval service, who congratulated me, as if I had taken so many prisoners. If it were so brilliant a capture, I could really have said that it had only caused me one single fright. However that may be, in the company it procured for me a very high opinion.

I continued to fulfil my duties with exemplary punctuality, and three months glided away, during which I had nothing but praise. This I determined always to deserve, but an adventurer's career was still to be my lot. A fatality which I was compelled to submit to unresistingly, and often unknowingly, perpetually threw me in contact with persons and things which were most in opposition to the destiny I was attempting to cut out for myself. It was to this singular fatality, that without being enrolled in the secret societies of the army, I was indebted for being initiated into its mysteries.

It was at Boulogne that these societies were first formed. The first of all, notwithstanding what M. Nodier says in his "History of the Philadelphes,"* was that of the Olympiens, whose founder was one Crombet of Namur. It was at first only composed of a few young naval officers, but it rapidly increased, and all military men were admitted; principally, however those of the artillery corps.

Crombet, who was very young, (only a volunteer of the first class,) laid aside his title of "chief of the Olympiens," and returned to the ranks of the brotherhood; who elected a "Vénérable," and formed themselves into a masonic order.

The society had not at first any political motive; or if it had, it was only known to the influential members. The avowed intent was mutual advancement.

* "Histoire des Sociétés secrètes de l'Armée et des Conspirations Militaires qui ont eu pour objet la destruction du gouvernement de Bonaparte."—2nd ed. Paris.

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The Olympien who got promotion was to exert all his influence to ensure the promotion of the brother Olympiens who were in inferior ranks. To be received, if belonging to the navy, it was necessary to be at least a volunteer of the second class: and at most, captain of a ship: if serving on land, the limits were, from a colonel to an adjutant, subaltern inclusive. I have never understood that, in their societies, the Olympiens ever discussed questions concerning the conduct of the government; but they proclaimed equality and brotherhood; and pronounced discourses which greatly contrasted with the imperial doctrines.

At Boulogne the Olympiens constantly met at the house of a madame Hervieux, who kept a kind of coffee-house, but little frequented. It was there that they kept their meetings, and installed their members in a room consecrated to that purpose.

There was at the Military as well as at the Polytechnic Schools, lodges which were united with the Olympiens. In general, the initiation was confined to pass-words, signs, and tokens, which were taught to the members on entrance; but the real adepts knew and looked for other things. The symbol of the society sufficiently explains their intentions:—an arm, with the hand grasping a dagger, was emerging from a cloud; above was a bust reversed. It was that of Cæsar. This symbol, which is easily explained, was imprinted on the seal of their diplomas. This seal had been modelled in relief by an artillery-man named Beaugrand, or Belgrand; and the brass stamp was procured by means of welding and cutting.

To be received as an Olympien, a proof of courage was required, as well as of talent and discretion. Soldiers of distinguished merit were those who had the preference of enrolment. As much as possible it was endeavoured to attract to the society the sons of patriots who had protested against the erection of the imperial throne, or who had been persecuted. Under

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the empire, it was enough to belong to a family of non-contents, to be at once placed on the list of admissibles.

The real chiefs of the association were in the shade, and never communicated their projects. They plotted the overthrow of despotism, but admitted no person to their confidence. It was necessary that the men, by whose intervention they hoped to accomplish their ends, should be conspirators without knowing it. No one was ever to propose to them to join a conspiracy, but they were voluntarily to lend their power and inclination. It was by virtue of this combination, that the Olympiens at length included in their numbers the lowest ranks of the army and navy.

If a subaltern or soldier evinced talent, energy, firmness, independence, and spirit, the Olympiens sought him as a recruit, and he soon entered the brotherhood, or was bound by the influence of an oath to afford to them, as far as in him lay, "help and protection." The reciprocal support which was promised seemed to be the sole bond of the fraternity; but there was, beneath this seeming, a concealed but no less determined premeditation. It was found, after long experience, that out of one hundred individuals admitted, scarcely ten obtained a promotion proportioned to their merits: thus, amongst a hundred individuals, it was probable that in a few years, ninety at least would be found opposed to the order of things in which it was impossible to advance a step. It was the sum of wisdom to have such men classed under a common denomination; men amongst whom it was certain that sooner or later a spirit of discontent would arise; men quite irritated and worn out by neglect or injustice, who would not hesitate to seize with eagerness on any opportunity of revenge. Thus was a league fomented, which had an existence of which it was itself unconscious. The elements of conspiracy were brought together, perfected themselves, and became more and more developed; but no conspirators were to be known or thought of until

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the conspiracy should be ripe for perpetration. They awaited a propitious moment.

The Olympiens preceded the Philadelphes by many years, and were at length united with them. The origin of their society is somewhat prior to the coronation of Napoleon. It is said that they were first united on the occasion of the disgrace of admiral Truguet, who was deprived because he had voted against the perpetual consulate. After the condemnation of Moreau, the society, constituted on a more extended basis, included a great many men of Brittany and Franche Compté. Amongst these latter was Oudet, who unfolded to the Olympiens the first idea of Philadelphy.

The Olympiens existed for two years without giving any cause of uneasiness to the government. At length, in 1806, M. Devilliers, commissary-general of police at Boulogne, wrote to Fouché to denounce their meetings. He did not signalise them as dangerous, but he thought it his duty to have them watched, and having no agent with him to whom he could confide such a duty, he consequently begged the minister to send to Boulogne one of those expert spies which a politic police always has in pay. The minister replied to the commissary-general, thanking him cordially for his zeal for the emperor's service, but stating that he had long had his eye on the Olympiens, as well as on many similar fraternities; that the government was sufficiently strong not to fear any conspiracies they might engender; and that, besides, they could not have any schemes but some crotchets of ideology, for which the emperor cared nothing; and that, according to all appearances, the Olympiens were but dreaming speculatists, and their union only one of those masonic puerilities invented by some fools to amuse others.

This security of Fouché was but feigned; for scarcely had he received the information which M. Devilliers had transmitted, than he sent for the young comte de L***, who was initiated into the secrets of nearly every society in Europe. He thus addressed him.

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"They write me from Boulogne, that a sort of secret association has been formed in the army under the title of 'Olympiens.' I am not informed of the objects of the society, but they tell me that its ramifications are most extensive. Perhaps they have some bond of union with the 'Conciliabules' who met at the houses of Bernadotte and de Staël. I know well enough what passes there: Garat, who thinks me his friend, and who has the goodness to suppose me still a patriot as I was in 93, tells me everything. There are some Jacobins who imagine that I regret the republic, and would do all in my power to restore it: they are the fools whom I exile or place as may suit me,—Truguet, Rousselin, Guinguené form no plan, say no word, of which I am not informed. They are gentry not very formidable; like all the Moreau gang, they talk much, and do little. However, for some time, they think they must have a party in the army; and it is necessary that I should know their plans: the Olympiens are perhaps their creation. It would be well that you should become an Olympien; you will disclose to me the secrets of these gentlemen, and I shall then know what steps to take."

The count de L*** told Fouché, that the proposed mission was a delicate affair; that the Olympiens would probably only receive members after they had been convinced of their fidelity and fitness; and that, besides, no one would be admitted to the brotherhood, who did not belong to the army. Fouché reflected a moment on these obstacles, and then said—"I have hit on a mode of causing you to be instantly admitted. Go to Genès; you will there find a detachment of Ligurian conscripts, who are under orders for Boulogne, to be incorporated in the eighth regiment of foot artillery. Amongst them is a count Boccardi, for whom his family have vainly endeavoured to procure a substitute. You shall offer to supply the place of the noble Genèse; and, to remove all difficulties, I give you a certificate, stating that you have, under the name

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of Bertrand, satisfied the laws of conscription. Thus you will be put in a straightforward path, and will march with the detachment. On reaching Boulogne, you will see your colonel,* a fanatic in masonry, illuminatism, hermetism, &c. You must tell him who you are; and, as you have rank, he will be sure to protect you. You can then tell him all concerning your origin that you may choose, and that may aid your plans. This confidence will at first do away with the sort of mistrust that is usually shown to a substitute, and will ultimately procure you the regard of the other officers. But it is indispensable that you should make them believe that you have turned soldier on compulsion. Under your real name you were exposed to persecution from the emperor; and, to escape proscription, you had concealed yourself in a regiment. This is your tale, which will circulate throughout the camp, and no one will doubt but that you are the victim and enemy of the imperial system. I have no occasion to enter into longer details; the consequences will naturally ensue;—besides, I rely much,—entirely, on your sagacity."

Thus instructed, the count de L*** set out for Italy, and soon afterwards he entered France with the Ligurian conscripts. Colonel Aubry received him like a brother after a long absence, dispensed with his military drillings, assembled the lodge of the regiment to receive and feast him, and showed him every attention; authorizing him to wear plain clothes; and treated him, in a word, with the greatest distinction.

In a few days the army knew that M. Bertrand was a "somebody." They could not give him epaulets, but he was nominated serjeant; and the officers forgetting, in his case only, that he was in the inferior ranks of a military hierarchy, did not hesitate to admit

* Colonel Aubry, inspector-general of artillery, who fell in his thirty-third year. He died a few days after the battle of Dresden, in which his two legs were carried off by a shot.

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him to an intimacy. M. Bertrand was the oracle of the corps: he was intelligent and full of information, and they were disposed to consider him more witty and well-informed than he really was. However, he soon got acquainted with several Olympiens, who each desired the peculiar honour of introducing him to the fraternity. M. Bertrand was initiated, and as soon as he succeeded in establishing a communication with the Olympien leaders, he forwarded his reports to the minister of the police.

What I have related of the society of the Olympiens and of M. Bertrand, was told me by M. Bertrand himself; and to confirm the veracity of my statement, it will not, perhaps, be superfluous to say, how he was led to confide to me the mission with which he was charged, and to reveal to me those circumstances, of which mention is here made for the first time.

Nothing was more common at Boulogne than duelling; and the mania had extended even to the dull and peaceable Netherlanders of the flotilla, under the orders of admiral Werhwel. There was not far from the camp on the left, at the foot of a hill, a small wood, which could be passed at no hour without observing on the turf a dozen individuals engaged in what they called an affair of honour. It was here that a celebrated amazon, the demoiselle Div***, fell under the sword of a quondam lover, colonel Camb***, who, not recognizing her in her male attire, had accepted from her a challenge to single combat. The demoiselle Div***, whom he had forsaken for another, had wished to perish beneath his hand.

One day I was casting my eyes on this scene of bloody encounter, from the extremity of the left camp which peopled the extensive plain, when I saw at some distance from the little wood two men, one of whom was advancing towards the other, who was retreating across the plain. By the white trowsers I knew the champions were Hollanders, and I paused a moment to look at them. Soon the assailant retro-

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graded in his turn, and then, mutually alarmed, they both retreated, brandishing their sabres; one, plucking up a little courage, made a thrust at his adversary, and then pursued him to the brink of a ditch which he was unable to leap. Both then throwing down their swords, a pugilistic combat commenced between the heroes, who thus decided their quarrel. I was greatly amused at this comic duel, when I saw near a farm where we sometimes went to eat "codiau" (a kind of white soup made with flour and eggs) two individuals who, stripped to the skin, were already prepared, sword in hand, attended by their seconds, who were respectively a quarter-master of the tenth regiment of dragoons and a forager of artillery. The weapons soon crossed, and the smaller of the two combatants, who was an artillery serjeant, skipped about in a very singular manner, and having traversed in a strange way at least fifty paces, I thought he must be infallibly run through, when in an instant he disappeared, as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up, and a loud burst of laughter succeeded. After the first shoutings of this noisy mirth, the seconds approached, and I observed that they stooped down. Impelled by a feeling of curiosity, I went towards the spot, and arrived just in time to help them in pulling out from a hole dug for the formation of a large hog-trough, the poor devil whose sudden disappearance had so greatly astonished me. He was almost lifeless, and covered with mire from head to feet. The air soon brought him back to his senses, but he was afraid to breathe; he dared not open his eyes or mouth, so foul was the liquid in which he had been plunged. In this woful plight, the first words that saluted his ears were jokes. Feeling disgusted at such unfeeling conduct, I yielded to my just indignation, and darted at his antagonist one of those significant glances which between soldier and soldier need no interpreter. "Enough," said he, "I am ready for you;" and scarcely was I on my guard, when on the arm which

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held the foil, to which I had opposed mine, I saw a tattooing which I thought was not unknown to me. It was the figure of an anchor, of which the stem was encircled by the folds of a serpent. "I see the tail," I exclaimed, "take care of the head;" and with this word of advice I thrust at my man, and hit him on the right breast. "I am wounded," he then said, "that is first blood."—"It is," said I, "first blood;" and without another word I began to tear my shirt to stanch the blood that flowed from his wound. I necessarily exposed his breast, where, as I had judged, I saw the head of the serpent, which was delineated as if gnawing the extremity of his bosom.

Observing how earnestly I alternately examined his features and this mark, my adversary seemed to grow uneasy: but I hastened to assure him, by these words which I whispered in his ear: "I know you; but fear nothing, I am discreet."—"I know you too," he replied, squeezing my hand, "and I will be also silent." He who thus promised secrecy was a fugitive galley-slave from the Bagne of Toulon. He told me his assumed name, and stated that he was principal quarter-master of the 10th dragoons, where in expense he surpassed all the officers of his regiment.

Whilst this mutual recognition was taking place, the individual whose cause I had espoused as the champion of his wrongs, was endeavouring to wash off in a rivulet the thickest of the filth which covered him, and he soon returned to us, and all were now quiet and well behaved, so that there were no longer any grounds of difference, and the inclination for laughter was turned into an uncommon wish for reconciliation.

The principal quarter-master, whom I had wounded but slightly, proposed that we should ratify articles of peace at the Canon d'Or, where they had always ready excellent stewed eels and ready-plucked poultry. He there gave us a princely breakfast, which was kept up till supper came, for which his adversary paid.

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On our separation, the quarter-master made me promise to meet him again, and the serjeant would not be contented unless I accompanied him home.

This serjeant was M. Bertrand, who lodged in the upper town, in the house of a superior officer. As soon as we were alone, he testified his gratitude with all the warmth of which he was capable; for after drinking, a coward who has been rescued from peril may evince some feeling. He made me offers of any kind of service, and as I would accept of none, he said, "You think, perhaps, that I have no influence; I should be but a paltry protector, certainly, comrade, if I had only the power of a subaltern; but that is because I do not wish to be otherwise. I have no ambition, and all the Olympiens are like me; they despise the miserable distinction which rank confers." I asked who the Olympiens were? "They are," he replied, "men who adore liberty, and seek equality: will you be an Olympien? For if so, say the word, and you shall be admitted instantly."

I thanked M. Bertrand, adding, that I did not see any necessity to enrol myself in a society to which the attention of the police would be drawn sooner or later. "You are right," he replied; and then with earnestness added, "do not enter, for it will go badly with them." He then gave me details concerning the Olympiens, which I have already inserted in these Memoirs; and, as if impelled by the feeling of confidential communication which champagne so peculiarly excites, he told me, under the seal of secresy, the object of his mission to Boulogne.

After this first interview, I continued to see M. Bertrand, who remained for some time in his office of "spy," until the period having arrived when he was sufficiently instructed, he asked and procured a month's leave of absence, being about, as he said, to obtain a considerable estate; but at the expiration of the month M. Bertrand did not return, and the report spread that he had carried off the sum of 12,000 francs,

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which had been confided to his care by colonel Aubry, for whom he was to have brought back an equipage and horses; another sum, destined for purchases on account of the regiment, had also been carried off by the active M. Bertrand. It was known that in Paris he had alighted at the Rue Notre-Dame des Victoires, at the Hotel de Milan, where he had pushed his credit to the very utmost extent.

All these particulars caused a mystification, of which even the sufferers by it dared not openly to complain. It was only settled that M. Bertrand had disappeared: he was tried and condemned, as a deserter, to five years' labour. A short time afterwards, an order arrived for the arrest of the principal Olympiens, and for the dissolving of their society. But this order could be but partially enforced; as the leaders, aware that government was about to interfere with them, and cast them into the dungeons of Vincennes, or some other state prison, preferred death to a miserable existence, and five suicides took place on the same day. A serjeant-major of the twenty-fifth regiment of the line, and two other serjeants of another regiment, blew out their brains. A captain, who had the previous evening received his commission and a company, cut his throat with a razor. He lodged at the Lion d'Argent: and the innkeeper, M. Boutrois, astonished that he did not, as usual, come down to breakfast with the other officers, knocked at his door. The captain was stooping over a large basin which he had placed to receive the blood; he put on his cravat hastily, opened the door, and fell dead in the effort of speaking. A naval officer, who commanded a brig laden with powder, set fire to it, which communicated to another brig, which also blew up. The earth shook for several miles round, and all the windows in the lower town were broken; the fronts of several houses on the harbour were shaken down; pieces of wood, broken masts, and fragments of carcasses, were hurled to a distance of eighteen hundred toises.

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The crews of the two ships perished. One man only was saved, and that most miraculously. He was a common sailor, and at the time of the explosion in the main-top; the mast to which he clung was carried almost to the clouds, and then fell perpendicularly into the basin of the harbour, which was dry, and planted itself to a depth of more than six feet. The sailor was found alive, but had lost both sight and hearing, which he never after recovered.

At Boulogne, these coincidences were the theme of general conversation. The doctors pretended that these simultaneous suicides were the result of a peculiar affection emanating from the atmosphere. They appealed, by way of proof, to an observation made at Vienna, where, the previous summer, a great many young girls, impelled by a sort of frenzy, had thrown themselves into the river on the same day.

Some persons thought they could explain what appeared most extraordinary in this circumstance, by saying, that most commonly one suicide, when very generally talked of, is followed by two or three others. In fact, the public understood the cause the less, inasmuch as the police, which feared to allow anything to appear that could characterise the opposition to the imperial regime, designedly circulated the wildest reports; and precautions were so well taken, that in this instance the name of Olympien was not once pronounced in the camps: but the real origin of these tragic events was in the denunciations of M. Bertrand. Doubtless, he was recompensed, although I know not in what manner; but what appears most probable is, that the minister of police, satisfied with his services, continued to employ him; for, some years afterwards, he was in Spain, in the regiment of Isembourg, where, as a lieutenant, he was no less thought of than Montmorenci, Saint-Simon, and other offsprings of some of the most illustrious houses of France, who had been placed in this corps.

A short time after the disappearance of M. Ber-

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trand, my company was sent to St. Leonard, a small village, at a league from Boulogne. There our duties consisted in guarding a powder magazine, in which was kept a large quantity of warlike stores and ammunition. The service was not arduous, but the fort was thought dangerous, as many sentinels had been murdered on duty; and it was thought that the English had a design of blowing up this depot. Some such attempts, which had taken place in various posts, left no doubt on the matter; and we had sufficient reason, therefore, for exercising unremitting vigilance.

One night, when it was my turn to keep guard, we were suddenly roused by the report of a musket, and every one was instantly on foot. I hastened, according to custom, to relieve the guard, who was a conscript, of whose courage there was some doubt; and, on being questioned, I thought, from his answers, that he had been needlessly alarmed. I then went round the magazine, which was an old church; I had all parts and places examined, but nothing was observable, —no trace of any person. Persuaded, then, that it was a false alarm, I reprimanded the conscript and threatened him with the black-hole. However, on the return of the relief-piquet, I interrogated him afresh; and, from the assured tone with which he asserted that he had seen some one, and by the details he gave, I began to think that his terror was not so causeless as I had imagined, and I consequently went out, and going a second time towards the magazine, of which I found the door ajar, I pushed it open, and on entering, my eyes were struck with the faint glimmering of a light which projected from between two rows of boxes filled with cartridges. I dashed along the passage, and on reaching the extremity, I saw a lighted lamp beneath the lowest cask, the flames of which already had smoked the wood, and a smell of turpentine pervaded the place. There was not a moment to lose, and without hesitation I overturned the lamp,

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and stamped out all the other appearances of sparks, &c. The profound darkness that ensued, guaranteed to me the certainty that I had prevented the explosion, but I was not at ease until the smell was entirely dissipated, and then I went away. Who was the incendiary? This I knew not; but there arose in my mind strong suspicions of the magazine-keeper, and to arrive at the truth I went forthwith to his residence. His wife was then alone, and told me that, kept at Boulogne on business, he would sleep there, and would return on the next morning. I asked for the keys of the magazine, but he had taken them with him; and this removal of the keys confirmed me in the opinion that he was guilty: but, before I made any report, I again visited his house at ten o'clock, to convince myself, and he had not then returned.

An inventory, which was made the same day, proved that the keeper must have the greatest interest in destroying the depot intrusted to his care, as the only mode by which he could conceal the extensive robberies he had committed. Six weeks elapsed before we learnt what had become of him; and then some reapers found his dead body in a wheat field, with a pistol lying beside him.

As it had been my presence of mind which had prevented the blowing up of the powder magazine, I was promoted to the rank of serjeant; and the general, who desired to see me, promised to recommend me to the consideration of the ministry. As I thought I was now in a fair way to do well, I was very careful to lose, as Lebel, all the bad qualities of Vidocq; and, if the necessary duty of attending to the distribution of rations had not led me to Boulogne occasionally, I should have been a most exemplary fellow; but every time I went to the city, I had to visit the quarter-master-in-chief of dragoons, against whom I had espoused the cause of M. Bertrand: not that he exacted this from me, but I thought it needful to be on good terms with

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him. Then, however, the whole day was consecrated to Bacchus; and, in spite of myself, I lapsed from my good intentions of reform.

By the help of a supposititious uncle, a man of wealth and influence, whose property, he said, was secured to him, my old colleague of the Bagne led a very agreeable life; and the credit he obtained, from the reputation of being a person of family, was unlimited. There was not a Boulognese citizen of wealth but cultivated the acquaintance of a personage of such distinction most sedulously. The most ambitious papas desired nothing more ardently than to have him for a son-in-law; and, amongst the young ladies, it was the general wish to catch him: thus he had facilities of dipping into the purses of the one, and obtaining the good graces of the other. He had an equipment like a colonel,—dogs, horses, and servants, and affected the tone and manners of a nobleman. He possessed, in a supreme degree, the art of throwing powder in people's eyes and making himself appear a man of consequence; so much so, that the officers themselves, who are generally so extremely jealous of the prerogatives belonging to an epaulet, thought it very natural that he should eclipse them. In any place but Boulogne, the adventurer would have been soon detected as a swindler, as he had not received any education; but in a city where the citizens of a recent establishment were as yet genteel in costume only, it was an easy matter to carry on such an imposition.

Fessard was the real name of this quarter-master, who was only known at the Bagne as Hippolyte. He was, I believe, from Low Normandy; and, with an exterior of much frankness, an open countenance, and the haughty air of a young rake, he combined that sly character which slander has attributed to the inhabitants of Domfront: in a word, he was a shrewd man of the world, and gifted with all that was necessary to inspire confidence. A rood of land in his own country would have been to him sufficient

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to have produced a thousand actions at law, and quite a sufficient possession to have enabled him to make his fortune by ruining his neighbour; but Hippolyte really had nothing in the world, and unable to turn pleader, he became a swindler, then a forger, then —— we shall learn what, and must not anticipate.

Every time I visited the town, Hippolyte paid for dinner; and one day, between dessert and cheese, he said to me, "Do you know I am astonished at you;—to live in the country like an anchorite; to be content with a daily pittance; to have just twenty-two sous per diem. I cannot conceive how a person can endure such a lot; as for me, I would rather die at once. But you have your pickings somewhere, slily; you are not the lad to live without some such additions." I told him that my pay sufficed for me; and, besides, I was fed, clothed, and in want of nothing. "All very fine," he replied; "but yet we have some priggers (grinchisseurs) here: you have no doubt heard of the "minions of the moon" (l'armée de la Lune)—you must be one; and, if you like, I will quarter you;—take the environs of Saint Leonard."

I was told that the army "de la Lune" was a band of malefactors, the leaders of whom were, up to this period, concealed from the scrutiny of the police. These brigands, who had organized a system of murder and robbery for a circuit of more than ten leagues, all belonged to various regiments. At night they ranged about the camps, or concealed themselves on the roads, making pretended rounds and patrols, stopping any person who presented the least hope of booty. That they might not be impeded, they provided themselves with uniforms of every denomination. At a time of need they were captains, colonels, generals, and used all the proper words of regimental order and discipline,—pass-words, countersigns, &c.; with which some trusty friends took care to inform them, from time to time, as they were altered.

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From what I knew the proposal of Hippolyte was well calculated to alarm me; for either he was one of the leaders of this army de la Lune, or he was one of the secret agents employed by the police to effect the breaking up of this army: perhaps he was both. My situation with him was most embarrassing, and the thread of my destiny was again entangled; nor could I, as at Lyons, extricate myself from this business by denouncing him: and then, what would it have availed me to have denounced him, had he been an agent?—This idea made me cautious of the mode in which I should reject his proposition, which I did by saying with firmness, that I was resolved to become an honest man. "Did'n't you see," said he, "that I was only joking? and you take up the matter seriously; I only wanted to try you. I am charmed, my comrade, to find in you such a determination. I have formed a similar one," he added, "and am on the highway to it; and the devil shall not again turn me from it." Then, turning the conversation, we left all further mention of the army de la Lune.

Eight days after this interview, during which Hippolyte had made me this proposal, so promptly retracted, my captain, on going through the inspection, condemned me to four-and-twenty hours' confinement, for a spot which, he said, was on my uniform. This cursed spot, although I opened my eyes as widely as possible, I was unable to perceive; but be it as it may, I went to the guard-house without a murmur. Four-and-twenty hours soon pass away! The next morning would terminate my sentence:—when, at five o'clock in the morning, I heard the trot of horses, and soon afterwards I heard the following dialogue:—"Who goes there?"—"France."—"What regiment?"—"The imperial corps of gendarmerie." At the word gendarmerie I felt an involuntary shudder, and suddenly my door opened and some one called "Vidocq." Never did this name, falling suddenly on the ears of a troop of villains, disconcert them more effectually than it

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did myself at this moment. "Come, follow us," cried out the officer; and, to prevent any possibility of escape, he fastened a rope round me. I was instantly conducted to prison, where I had a tolerable bed, on paying for it. I found a numerous and goodly assemblage. "Did I not say so?" cried a soldier of artillery, whom, by his accent, I knew to be a Piedmontese. "We shall have all the camp. Here is another. I will bet my head that he owes his imprisonment to that thief of a quarter-master. Will no one cut that villain's throat?"—"Go, look for him, then, your quarter-master;" interrupted a second prisoner, who also seemed to be a new comer. "Whatever he may have done, he is now at a distance; he has made himself scarce a week since. But, my lads, you must own that he is a crafty chap. In less than three months, forty thousand francs in debt in the city. What a lucky dog! And then how many little boys and girls has he left behind—I should be sorry to father all his flock. Six young ladies, daughters of our leading burgesses, are in a fair way of becoming mammas! Each thought she had him to herself; but he seems to have cut his heart into small pieces, and shared it amongst them!"—"Oh! yes," said a turnkey, who was preparing my bed, "he has spent like a prodigal, and now must mind what he is about; for, if they catch him, handcuffs are the word. He is marked as a deserter. He will be caught, I think."—"Do not make too sure, I replied; "they will catch him as they caught M. Bertrand."—"Well, suppose he should be taken," resumed the Piedmontese, "would that prevent my being guillotined at Turin? Besides, I repeat it, I will bet my head—"—"What does the fool say about his head?" cried a fourth. "We are here in prison, and as it was to be, what consequence through whose means!" This reasoner was right. It would have been useless to lose oneself in a field of conjectures, and we must all have been blind not to have recognized Hippolyte as the author of our arrest. As for

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me, I could not be deceived, for he was the only person in Boulogne who knew that I had escaped from the Bagne.

Many soldiers of different ranks came against their will to fill up a chamber in which were assembled the principal leaders of the army de la Lune. Very seldom in the prison of so small a town, was there seen a more singular assemblage of delinquents; the "prévôt," that is the elder of our room, named Lelievre, was a poor devil of a soldier, who, condemned to death three years before, had perpetually before him the chance of the termination of the respite, by virtue of which he still existed. The emperor, to whose mercy he had been recommended, had pardoned him; but as the pardon had not been registered, and as the indispensable official papers had not been transmitted to the chief judge, Lelievre continued a prisoner; and all that could be done in favour of this unfortunate being, was to suspend the execution until the moment when an opportunity should present itself of again calling the emperor's attention to his case. In this state, in which his life was uncertain, Lelievre deliberated between the hope of freedom and the fear of death; he laid down to sleep with the one and awoke with the other. Every evening he thought himself sure of his liberty, and every morning he expected to be shot; sometimes gay even to folly, sometimes dull and spiritless, he never enjoyed a moment of equable calm. If he played a game of draughts or matrimony, he paused in the midst of it, threw down the cards, and striking his forehead with his clenched hands, jumped from his seat, and raving like a madman, he ended by flinging himself on his bed, where, lying on his face, he remained for hours in a state of mental depression. The hospital was Lelievre's house of pleasure; and if he got wearied, he went there for consolation from sister Alexandrine, who had a most tender heart, and sympathized with all the wretched. This compassionate sister was deeply interested in the prisoner, and Lelievre deserved

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it, for he was not a criminal but a victim; and the sentence against him was the unjust result of a feeling but too common in councils of war, that the innocent should even suffer if there are disorders to repress. The conscience and humanity of judges ought to be silent when necessity calls for exemplary punishment. Lelievre was one of the few of those men who, steeled against vice, can without danger to their morality remain in contact with the most contaminated. He acquitted himself in his duties of steward (prévôt) with as much equity as if he had been endued with all the powers of a licensed magistrate; he never let off a new comer, but explained to him his duties as a prisoner, endeavouring to render as easy as possible the first days of his captivity; and rather might be said to do the honours of the prison than to enforce his authority.

Another character also attracted the regard and affection of the prisonèrs, Christiern, whom we called the Dane. He did not speak French, and only understood by signs; but his intelligence seemed to penetrate our very thoughts; he was melancholy, thoughtful, and gentle; in his features there was a mixture of nobleness, candour, and sadness, which insinuated and touched at the same time. He wore a sailor's dress; but the flowing curls of his long black hair, his snowy white linen, the delicacy of his complexion and manners, the beauty of his hand, all announced a man of exalted condition. Although a smile was often on his lips, yet Christiern appeared a prey to the deepest sorrow; but he kept his grief to himself, and no one knew even the cause of his detention. One day he was summoned whilst he was engaged in tracing on the glass with a flint the drawing of a fleet, which was his sole amusement, except occasionally sketching the portrait of a female, whose resemblance he seemed delighted to be perpetually depicting. We saw him go out; and soon afterwards being brought back, scarcely was the door closed upon him, than taking from a leathern bag a prayer-book, he was soon engrossed in its perusal.

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At night he slept as usual until daybreak, when the sound of a drum warned us that a detachment was entering the prison yard, and he then dressed himself hastily, gave his watch and money to Lelievre, who was his bedfellow; and having frequently kissed a small crucifix which he always wore round his neck, he shook hands with all of us. The gaoler, who was present, was very deeply affected; and when Christiern left us, said, "They are going to shoot him; all the troops are assembled, and in less than a quarter of an hour all his misfortunes will terminate. This sailor whom you all took for a Dane, is a native of Dunkirk; his real name is Vandermot; he served in the corvette Hirondelle, and was taken prisoner by the English, and placed in the hold of a prison ship with many others; when, exhausted with breathing infectious air and almost starving, he consented to a proposal of being removed from this living tomb, on condition that he would embark in a vessel belonging to the East India Company. On the return of the ship it was captured by a privateer, and Vandermot was brought here with the rest of the crew. He was to have been sent to Valenciennes, but at the moment of departure, an interpreter interrogated him, and it was found by his answers that he was not conversant with the English language; this gave rise to suspicions, and he declared that he was a subject of the king of Denmark; but as he had no proof of this assertion, it was decided that he should remain here until the whole affair should be cleared up. Some months elapsed, and Vandermot seemed to have been forgotten, when one day a woman and two children came to the gaol, and asked for Christiern. 'My husband!' she cried, seeing him. 'My wife! my children!' he exclaimed, embracing them with ardour. 'How imprudent you are!' said I in a whisper to Christiern! 'it is well that only I am with you!' I promised to be secret, but it was useless. In the joy of having news from him, his wife, to whom he had written, and who thought him dead, had shown his let-

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ters to her neighbours, and some of the most officious of them had already denounced him—the wretches! it is their deed which this day destroys him. For some old howitzers which the ship mounted, they have treated him as one taken in arms against his country. Are not such laws unjust?"

"Yes, yes, the laws are unjust," said a number of fellows who were sitting round a bed, playing at cards and drinking spirits. "Come, push round the glass," said one, handing it to his neighbour. "Holla!" said a second, who remarked the air of consternation expressed in Lelievre's features, and shook his arm; "do not put yourself in a fright about it! His turn to-day, ours to-morrow."

This conversation, horribly prolonged, degenerated into unfeeling jokes, until the sound of a drum and fifes, which the echo of the river repeated in various quarters, indicated that the detachments of various corps were marching back to the camp. A death-like silence pervaded the prison for several minutes, and we thought that Christiern had already undergone his sentence; but at the instant when his eyes were covered with the fatal bandage, and on his knees he awaited the execution of his sentence, an aide-de-camp had stopped the fire of the musketry. The prisoner again saw the light of heaven, and was to be restored to his wife and children, whose prayers and supplications to marshal Brune had been the means of saving his life. Christiern, led back to confinement, was still full of joy, as he had been assured of his speedy freedom. The emperor had been petitioned for his pardon, and the request, made in the name of the marshal himself, was so generously urged, that it was impossible to doubt of success.

The return of Christiern was an event on which we did not fail to congratulate him: we drank to the health of the returned prisoner; and the arrival of six new prisoners, who payed their entrance fees with much liberality, was an additional incentive to rejoicing.

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These men, whom I had known as a part of Paulet's crew, were sentenced to a few days' confinement, as a punishment for having, in boarding a prize, in defiance of the articles of war, plundered the English captain. As they had not been compelled to refund, they brought their guineas with them, and spent them freely. We were all satisfied: the gaoler, who collected even to the very smallest portions of this golden shower, was so pleased with his new guests, that he relaxed his vigilance, although there were in one room three prisoners under sentence of death, Lelievre, Christiern, and the Piedmontese Orsino, a chief of Barbets, who having encountered near Alexandria a detachment of conscripts marching towards France, had got into their ranks, where he had supplied the place and name of a deserter. Orsino, whilst serving under this flag, had conducted himself irreproachably, but had marred all by an indiscretion. A price was set upon his head in his own country, and the sentence was to be put into execution at Turin. Five other prisoners were under the weight of charges of the gravest nature. Four were marines; two of them Corsicans and two Provençals, charged with the assassination of a woman, from whom they had stolen a golden cross and silver buckles; the fifth had been, as well as they, of the army de la Lune, and to him were attributed very peculiar powers: the soldiers asserted that he could render himself invisible, and metamorphose himself as he pleased; he had, besides, the gift of ubiquity; in fact, he was a sorcerer; and that because he was hump-backed, facetious, severe, a great tale-teller, and, having been a sharper all his days, was clever in many tricks of legerdemain. With such company, most gaolers would have used the greatest precaution, but ours considered us as only skilful practitioners, and constantly associated with us. Besides, for ready cash he provided for all our wants, and had no idea that we could have any wish to leave him; and he was correct to a certain point; for Lelievre and Christiern had not the least wish to escape; Orsino

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was resigned; the marines did not anticipate a very severe sentence; the sorcerer relied on the insufficiency of evidence; and the privateers, always drinking, felt no sort of melancholy. I alone nourished the idea of getting away; but that I might not be suspected, I affected to be undisturbed; and so well did I conceal my intent, that it seemed as if the prison were my natural element, and all thought that I was as comfortable there as a fish in water. I did not drink but on one occasion, that of Christiern's return amongst us. That night we were all somewhat in liquor, and about two in the morning I felt a burning thirst which seemed to inflame my whole body; and on getting out of bed half awake, I groped about for the pitcher, and on drinking I found a most horrible mistake; I had taken one vessel for another, and was almost poisoned. By daybreak I had scarcely repressed the violent commotions of my stomach, when one of the turnkeys came to tell us that there was some work to be done: as this afforded an opportunity for getting a little air, which I thought would revive me, I offered myself as substitute for a privateer, whose clothes I put on; and crossing the court-yard, I saw a subaltern officer of my acquaintance who came in with his cloak on his arm. He told me that he was sentenced to a month's imprisonment for having created an uproar in the theatre, and had just been entered on the prison book. "In that case," said I, "you can begin your work at once; here is the trough." The subaltern was accommodating, and did not require a second hint; and whilst he went to work, I passed boldly by the sentinel, who took no notice of me.

Leaving the prison, I made my way into the country, and did not stop till I reached the bridge of Brique, where I paused in a small ravine, whilst I reflected on the best mode of escaping pursuit: and at first resolved on going to Calais, but my unlucky stars suggested my return to Arras. In the evening I went to sleep in a barn, in which travellers rested. One of them, who

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had left Boulogne three hours after me, told me that the whole city was plunged in grief at the execution of Christiern. "It is the only thing they can talk about," said he. "It was expected that the emperor would pardon him, but the telegraph signalled that he was to be shot. He had once narrowly escaped, but to-day he has suffered. It was piteous to hear him cry 'Pardon, pardon,' whilst endeavouring to raise himself after the first fire, amidst the howlings of some dogs behind him, whom the shots had struck! It went to the very heart, but yet they finished their work. It was his destiny!"

Athough this information caused me great affliction, I could not help thinking that Christiern's death would effect a diversion in favour of my escape; and as he told me nothing which seemed as if I had been missed on the general muster-call, I thought myself in security. I reached Bethune without mishap, and went to lodge with an old regimental acquaintance, who received me kindly. But however prudent one may be, there are always some unexpected occurrences: I had preferred the hospitality of a friend to a lodging at an auberge, and I had thereby placed myself in the jaws of danger; for my friend was recently married, and his wife's brother was one of those obstinate brutes, whose hearts, insensible to glory, only desires inglorious peace. As a natural consequence, the abode I had chosen, as well as those of all the young fellow's relations, were frequently visited by the gendarmes; and these very agreeable gentlemen invaded the residence of my friend long before daybreak, and, without any respect to my slumbers, demanded to see my papers. For want of a passport I endeavoured to enter into certain explanations with them, which was but lost labour. The brigadier, after viewing me attentively, cried out, "I am not mistaken, 'tis he; I have seen him at Arras; 'tis Vidocq!" I was compelled to get up, and in less than a quarter of an hour found myself in the prison of Bethune.

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Perhaps, before I proceed, my readers will not be sorry to learn the fate of my companions in captivity, whom I had left at Boulogne; and I can satisfy their curiosity with respect to some of them. We have learnt that Christiern was shot, brave, good fellow, as he was! Lelievre, who was equally worthy, lingered on between hope and fear till the year 1811, when the typhus fever terminated his existence. The four sailors, the murderers, were one night liberated, and sent to Prussia, where two of them received the cross of honour under the walls of Dantzic; and the sorcerer was released without any sentence having been passed. In 1814 he called himself Collinet, and was the quarter-master of a Westphalian regiment, of which he hoped to get the chest for his own particular profit. This adventurer not knowing how to dispose of his booty, went on the wings of haste to Burgundy, where, in the neighbourhood, he fell in with a troop of Cossacks, who compelled him to surrender, and give an account of himself. This was the last day of his life, for they ran him through with their lances.

My stay at Bethune was brief; for the day after my capture I was forwarded to Douai, whither I was conducted under good escort.

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CHAPTER XXI.

I am conducted to Douai—Application for pardon—My wife marries again—The plunge in the Scarpe—I travel as an officer—Reading the despatches—Residence at Paris—A new name—The woman of my heart—I am a wandering merchant—The commissary of Melun—Execution of Herbaux—I denounce a robber; he denounces me—The galley-slaves at Auxerre—I am settled in the capital—Two fugitives from the Bagne—My wife again—Receiving stolen goods.

I HAD scarcely set foot in the prison, when the attorney-general Rauson, whom my repeated escapes had irritated against me, appeared at the grating, and said—"What, Vidocq has arrived! Have they put him in fetters?"—"What have I done, sir," said I, "that you should wish to be so severe with me? Is it a great crime because I have so frequently escaped? Have I abused the liberty which I hold so precious? When I have been retaken, have I not been found exerting myself to procure honourable modes of livelihood? I am less guilty than unfortunate! Have pity on me,—pity my poor mother; if I am condemned to return to the Bagne, she will die!'

These words, pronounced with accents of sincerity, made some impression on M. Rauson, who returned in the evening, and questioned me at length of the mode of my life since I had left Toulon; and as in proof of what I told him I offered indubitable testimony, he began to evince some kindness towards me. "Why do you not draw up," said he, "an application for pardon, or at least for a commutation of the sentence? I will recommend you to the chief justice." I thanked the magistrate for his proffered kindness to me, and the same day a barrister of Douai, M. Thomas, who took a real interest in me, brought for my signature a petition, which he had been so kind as to draw up for me.

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I was in expectation of the answer, when one morning I was sent for to the police-office. Imagining that it was the decision of the minister which was to be communicated to me, and impatient to know it, I followed the turnkey with the haste of a man who anticipates agreeable intelligence. I relied on seeing the attorney general, but—my wife appeared, accompanied by two strangers. I endeavoured to guess the purport of her visit, when, with the most unembarrassed tone in the world, madame Vidocq said to me, "I have come to tell you that the sentence of our divorce has been pronounced. I am going to be married again, and therefore I have judged it best to go through this formality. The clerk will give you a copy of the judgment for perusal."

Except obtaining my freedom, nothing could be more agreeable to me than the dissolution of this marriage, as I was for ever embarrassed with a creature whom I loathed. I do not know if I had sufficient command of myself to restrain my joy, but certainly my countenance must have betokened it; and if, as I have cogent reasons to believe, my successor was present, he retired with a conviction that I did not at all envy him the treasure he was about to possess.

My detention at Douai was painfully prolonged. I was in suspense for five whole months, and nothing arrived from Paris. The attorney-general had evinced much interest for me, but misfortune engenders distrust, and I began to fear that he had led me on with a vain hope, that I might form no plans of escape before the departure of the galley-slaves; and struck with the idea, I again plotted deeply-laid projects for escape.

The gaoler, named Wettu, viewing me as gained over and peaceable, showed me various little favours; we frequently dined together tête-a-tête in a small room with one window, which looked on to the Scarpe. It struck me, that with the aid of this opening, which was not grated, some day, after dinner, I could easily take French leave, and depart; only it was absolutely necessary

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that I should secure some disguise, which, when I had effected my escape, would effectually conceal me from all pursuit. I confided my intentions to some friends, and they provided for me the uniform of an artillery officer, of which I resolved to avail myself at the very first opportunity. One Sunday evening I was at table with the gaoler, and the agent Hurtrel; the wine had made them very merry, for I had pushed it about briskly. "Do you know, my hearty," said Hurtrel to me, "that it would have been no safe business to have put you here seven years ago. A window without bars! By Jove, I would not have trusted you."—"And further, Hurtrel," I replied, "one should be made of cork to risk a plunge from such a height; the Scarpe is very deep for a person who cannot swim."—"True," said the gaoler; and there the conversation rested, but my determination was taken. Some friends arrived, and the gaoler sat down to play with them; and fixing on the moment when he was most intent on his game, I threw myself into the river.

At the noise of my fall, all the party ran to the window, whilst Wettu called loudly to the guard and turnkeys to pursue me. Fortunately, twilight rendered it scarcely possible to discern objects; and my hat, which I had thrown designedly on the bank, seemed to indicate that I had immediately got out of the river, whilst I had continued swimming towards the Watergate, under which I passed with great difficulty, in consequence of being very cold, and my strength beginning to fail. Once out of the city, I gained the bank, my clothes full of water, not weighing less than a hundred weight; but I had made up my mind not to delay, and pushed on at once for Blangy, a village two leagues from Arras. It was four in the morning; and a baker, who was heating his oven, gave me leave to dry my garments, and supplied me with food. As soon as I was dried and refreshed, I started for Duisans, where the widow of an old friend of mine, a captain, resided. A messenger was to bring to me there the uniform

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which had been provided for me at Douai; and no sooner had I obtained it, than I went to Hersin, where I stayed a few days with a cousin of mine. The advice of my friends, which was very rational, urged me to depart as quickly as possible; and as I learnt that the police, convinced that I was in the vicinity, were beating up every quarter, and were approching the place of my abode, I determined not to wait for them.

It was evident that Paris only could afford me refuge; but to get to Paris it was indispensable I should pass through Arras, where I should be infallibly recognised. I cogitated on the means of obviating this danger; and prudence suggested to me to get into the wicker calash of my cousin, who had a famous horse, and was the cleverest fellow in the world for his knowledge of the cross-roads. He pledged himself, on the reputation of his talent as a guide, to carry me in safety by the ramparts of my native town; and I wanted no more at his hands, trusting in my disguise to effect the rest. I was no longer Vidocq, unless I was examined very closely; and on reaching the bridge of Gy, I saw, without the least alarm, eight horses belonging to gendarmes, tied to the door of a public-house. I confess I would rather have avoided the rencontre; but it faced me, and it was only by fronting it boldly that I could hope to escape detection. "Come on," said I to my cousin; "here we must make an essay; get down; be as quick as you can, and call for something." He immediately alighted, and entered the public-house with the air of a man who had no dread of the eye of the brigade. "Ah!" said they, "it is your cousin Vidocq that you are driving?"—"Perhaps it may be," he answered, with a laugh; "go and see." A gendarme did approach the calash, but rather from curiosity than suspicion. At the sight of my uniform, he respectfully touched his hat, and said, "Your servant, captain;" and soon afterwards mounted his horse with his comrades. "Good journey," cried my cousin, cracking his whip; "if you lay hold of him, perhaps you will write

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us word."—"Go your way," said the quarter-master, who commanded the troop, "we know his haunt; Hersin is the word; and to-morrow by this time, he will be again between four walls."

We continued our journey very quietly, but yet one thing made me somewhat uneasy; my military dress might expose me to some difficulties which would have an unpleasant result. The war with Prussia had begun, and there were but few officers in the interior, unless they were confined there by some wound. I determined on carrying my arm in a sling as an officer who had been disabled at Jena; and if any questions were asked, I was prepared to give all particulars on this subject, which I had learnt from the bulletins; and to add those which I could pick up by hearing a multitude of accounts, some true and some false, from witnesses either ocular or not. In fact, I was quite *au fait* concerning the battle of Jena, and could speak to all comers with perfect knowledge of the subject; nobody knew more of it than I did. I acquitted myself in admirable style at Beaumont, when the weariness of our horse, which had conveyed us thirty-three leagues in a day and a half, compelled us to halt. I had already begun conversing in the inn, when I saw a quarter-master of gendarmes go straight up to an officer of dragoons, and ask for his papers. I went up to the quarter-master and asked him the motive of this precaution. "I asked for his route," he answered, "because when every one is with the army, a healthy officer would not be left in France." "You are right, comrade," said I, "duty must be performed;" and at the same time, that he might not take a fancy to ask me a similar question, I asked him to dine with us; and during the meal I so far gained his confidence, that he requested me, on reaching Paris, to use my interest in procuring him a change of quarters. I promised all he asked, which much pleased him; as I was to use my own influence, which was great, and that of others still more powerful. We are generally prodigal in bestowing that which we have

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not. However it may be, the flask circulated rapidly; and my guest, in the enthusiasm of having secured an interest which was so desirable to him, began to talk that voluble nonsense which usually precedes drunkenness, when a gendarme brought him a packet of despatches. He opened them with an unsteady hand, and attempted to read them, but his eyes refused their office, and he begged me to peruse them for him. I opened a letter, and the first words which struck my sight were these: "Brigade of Arras." I hastily read it, and found that it was advice of my travelling towards Beaumont, and adding that I must have taken the diligence of the Silver Lion. In spite of my agitation, I read the letter to him, omitting or adding particulars as I pleased. "Good! very good!" said the sober and vigilant quarter-master; "the conveyance will not pass until to-morrow morning, and I will take due care." He then sat down with the intention of drinking more, but his strength did not equal his courage, and they were obliged to carry him to bed, to the great scandal of all the lookers-on, who repeated with much indignation, "What! the quarter-master! a man of rank, to behave so shamefully!"

As might be conjectured, I did not wait the uprising of the man of rank; and at five o'clock got into the Beaumont diligence, which conveyed me safely to Paris, where my mother, who had remained at Versailles, rejoined me. We dwelt together for some months in the faubourg Saint-Denis, where we saw no one except a jeweller named Jacquelin, whom I was compelled, to a certain extent, to make my confidant, because he had known me at Rouen under the name of Blondel. It was at his house that I met a madame de B——, who holds the first rank in the affections of my life. Madame de B——, or Annette, for so I call her, was a very pretty woman, whom her husband had abandoned in consequence of his affairs turning out unfortunate. He had fled to Holland, and had not been heard of for a considerable time. Annette was

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then quite free; she pleased me; I liked her wit, understanding, kindly feeling, and ventured to tell her so; she saw soon, and without much trouble, my assiduity and regard; and we found that we could not exist without each other. Annette came to live with me, and as I resumed the trade of a travelling seller of fashionable commodities, she resolved to accompany me in my perambulations. The first journey we undertook together was excessively fortunate. I learnt, however, at the moment I was leaving Melun, from the landlord of the inn at which I had put up, that the commissary of police had testified some regret at not having examined my papers; but what was deferred was not ended, and that at my next visit, he meant to pay me a visit. The information surprised me, for I must consequently have been in some way an object of suspicion. To go on might lead to danger, and I therefore returned to Paris, resolving not to make any other journeys, unless I could render less unfavourable the chances which combined against me.

Having started very early, I reached the faubourg Saint Marceau in good time; and at my entrance, I heard the hawkers bawling out, "that two well-known persons are to be executed to-day at the Place de Grêve." I listened, and fancied I distinguished the name of Herbaux. Herbaux, the author of the forgery which caused all my misfortunes! I listened with more attention, but with an involuntary shudder; and this time the crier, to whom I had approached, repeated the sentence with these additions: "Here is the sentence of the criminal tribunal of the department of the Seine, which condemns to death the said Armand Saint Leger, an old sailor, born at Bayonne, and César Herbaux, a freed galley-slave, born at Lille, accused and convicted of murder," &c.

I could doubt no longer; the wretch who had heaped so much misery on my head was about to suffer at the scaffold. Shall I confess that I felt a sentiment of joy, and yet I trembled? Tormented again, and agitated

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with a perpetually renewing uneasiness, I would have destroyed all the population of the prisons and Bagnes, who, having been the means of casting me into the abyss of misery, had kept me there by their vile disclosures. It will not excite wonder, when I say that I ran with haste to the palace of justice to assure myself of the truth; it was not mid-day, and I had great trouble in reaching the grating, near which I fixed myself, waiting for the fatal moment.

At last four o'clock struck, and the wicket opened. A man appeared first on the sledge. It was Herbaux. His face was covered with a deadly paleness, whilst he affected a firmness which the convulsive workings of his features belied. He pretended to talk to his companion, who was already incapacitated from hearing him. At the signal of departure Herbaux, with a countenance into which he infused all the audacity he could force, gazed round on the crowd, and his eyes met mine. He started, and the blood rushed to his face. The procession passed on, and I remained as motionless as the bronze railings on which I was leaning; and I should probably have remained longer, if an inspector of the palace had not desired me to come away. Twenty minutes afterwards a car, laden with a red basket, and escorted by a gendarme, was hurried over the Pont-au-Change, going towards the burial-ground allotted for felons. Then, with an oppressed feeling at my heart, I went away, and regained my lodgings, full of sorrowful reflections.

I have since learnt, that, during his detention at the Bicêtre, Herbaux had expressed his regret at having been instrumental in getting me condemned, when innocent. The crime which had brought this wretch to the scaffold was a murder committed, in company with Saint Leger, on a lady of the Place Dauphine. These two villains had obtained access to their victim under pretence of giving her tidings of her son, whom they said they had seen in the army.

Although, in fact, Herbaux's execution could not

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have any direct influence over my situation, yet it alarmed me, and I was horror-struck at feeling that I had ever been in contact with such brigands, destined to the executioner's arm: my remembrance revealed me to myself, and I blushed, as it were, in my own face. I sought to lose the recollection, and to lay down an impassable line of demarcation between the past and the present; for I saw but too plainly, that the future was dependent on the past; and I was the more wretched, as a police, who have not always due powers of discernment, would not permit me to forget myself. I saw myself again on the point of being snared like a deer. The persuasion that I was interdicted from becoming an honest man drove me to despair; I was silent, morose, and disheartened. Annette perceived it, and sought to console me; she offered to devote herself for me, pressed me with questions, and my secret escaped me; but I never had cause to regret my confidence. The activity, the zeal, and presence of mind of this woman became very useful to me. I was in want of a passport, and she persuaded Jacquelin to lend me his; and to teach me how to make use of it, she gave me the most complete accounts of her family and connections. Thus instructed, I set out on my journey, and traversed the whole of Lower Burgundy. Almost everywhere I was examined as to my passport, which, if they had compared it with my person, would have at once disclosed the fraud; but this was nowhere done, and for more than a year, with trifling exceptions not worth detailing, the name of Jacquelin was propitious to me.

One day that I had unpacked at Auxerre, and was walking peaceably on the quay, I met one Paquay, a robber by profession, whom I had seen at the Bicêtre, where he was confined for six years. I would rather have avoided him, but he addressed me abruptly, and, from his first salutation, I found that it would not be safe to pretend no acquaintance with him. He was

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too inquisitive about what I was doing; and as I saw from his conversation that he wished me to join him in his robberies, I thought it best, to get rid of him, to talk of the police of Auxerre, whom I represented as very vigilant, and consequently much to be dreaded. I thought I saw that my information made an impression on him, and I coloured the picture still higher, until at length, after having listened with much, but unquiet attention, he suddenly cried, "Devil take it! it appears that there is nothing to be done here; the packet-boat will start in two hours, and if you like we will be off together."—"Agreed," said I; "if you are for starting I am your man." I then quitted him, after having promised to rejoin him immediately that I should have made some preparations which were necessary. How pitiable is the condition of a fugitive galley-slave, who, if he would not be denounced or implicated in some evil deed, must be himself the denouncer. Returned to the public-house, I then wrote the following letter to the lieutenant of the gendarmerie, whom I knew to be on the hunt for the authors of a robbery lately committed at the coach office:—

"SIR,

"A person who does not wish to be known, informs you, that one of the authors of the robbery committed at the coach-office in your city, will set out by the packet-boat to go to Soigny, where his accomplices most probably are. Lest you should fail, and not arrest him in time, it would be best for two disguised gendarmes to go on board the packet-boat with him, as it is important that he should be taken with prudence, and not be allowed to get out of sight, as he is a very active man."

This missive was accompanied by a description so minute that it was impossible to mistake him. The moment of departure arrived, and I went on the quays,

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taking a circuitous route, and from the window of a public-house where I stationed myself, I perceived Paquay enter the packet-boat, and soon afterwards the two gendarmes embarked, whom I recognised by a certain air, which may be seen, but cannot be described. At intervals they handed a paper to each other, which they perused, and then cast their eyes on the man, whose dress, contrary to the usual garb of the robbers, was in a bad condition. The boat moved on, and I saw it depart with the more pleasure, as it carried with it Paquay, his propositions, and even his discoveries, if, as I did not doubt, he had the intention of making any.

The day after this adventure, whilst I was taking an inventory of my merchandizes, I heard an extraordinary noise, and, looking from the windows, I saw Thierry and his satellites guarding a chain of galley-slaves! At this sight, so terrible and inauspicious for me, I drew back quickly, but in my haste I broke a pane of glass, and suddenly attracted all looks towards me. I wished myself in the bowels of the earth. But this was not all; for to increase my disquietude, somebody opened my door; it was the landlady of the pheasant, madame Gelat. "Here, M. Jacquelin, come and see the chain passing," she cried. "Oh, it is long since I saw such a fine one, there are at least one hundred and fifty, and some of them famous fellows! Do you hear how they are singing?" I thanked my hostess for her attention, and pretending to be much busied, told her that I would go down in an instant. "Oh, do not hurry yourself," she answered, "there is plenty of time, they are going to sleep here in our stables. And then if you wish to have any conversation with the commandant, they will put him in the chamber next to you." Lieutenant Thierry my neighbour! At this intelligence I know not what passed in my mind; but I think that if madame Gelat had observed me she would have seen my countenance grow pale, and my whole frame

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tremble with an involuntary shudder. Lieutenant Thierry my neighbour! He might recognise me, detect me; a gesture might betray me; and it was therefore expedient to avoid a rencontre if possible. The necessity of completing my inventory was an excuse for my apparent want of curiosity. I passed a frightful night, and it was not until four o'clock in the morning when the departure of the infernal procession was announced to me, that I breathed freely again.

He has never suffered, who has not experienced horrors similar to those into which the presence of this troop of banditti and their guards threw me. To be again invested with those fetters which I had broken at the cost of so much endurance and exertion, was an idea which haunted me incessantly. I was not the sole possessor of my own secret, for there were galley-slaves everywhere, who, if I sought to flee from them, would infallibly betray me: my repose, my very existence was menaced on all sides, and at all times. The glance of an eye, the name of a commissary, the appearance of a gendarme, the perusal of a sentence, all aroused and excited my alarm. How often did I curse the perverse fate which, deceiving my youth, had smiled at the disorderly license of my passions; and that tribunal which, by an unjust sentence, had plunged me into a gulf whence I could not extricate myself, nor cleanse myself of the foul imputations which clung to me; and those institutions which close for ever the door of repentance! I was excluded from society, and yet I was anxious to give it proofs of good conduct; I had given them; and I attest my invariable honourable behaviour after every escape, my habits of regularity, and my punctilious fidelity in fulfilling all my engagements.

Now some fears arose in my mind concerning Paquay, in whose arrest I had been instrumental; and, on reflection, it seemed that I had acted inconsiderately in this circumstance; I felt a forewarning

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of some impending evil, and the presentiment was realized. Paquay, when conducted to Paris and then brought back to be confronted at Auxerre, learnt that I was still in that city; he had always suspected me of having denounced him, and determined on his revenge. He told the gaoler all he knew concerning me, and he reported it to the authorities; but my reputation for probity was so well established in Auxerre, where I remained for three months at a time, that, to avoid an unpleasant business, a magistrate, whose name I will not disclose, sent for me, and gave me notice of what had occurred. There was no occasion for me to avow the truth, my agitation revealed all, and I had only strength to say, "Sir, I seek to be an honest man." Without any reply, he went out and left me alone. I comprehended his generous silence, and in a quarter of an hour I had lost sight of Auxerre; and from my retreat I wrote to Annette, to inform her of this fresh catastrophe. But to remove suspicion, I recommended her to stay for a fortnight at the "Pheasant," and to tell everybody that I was at Rouen, making purchases, and on the expiration of the time she was to rejoin me at Paris, where she arrived at the day appointed. She told me, that the day after my departure, disguised gendarmes had called at my warehouse, intending to arrest me, and that not finding me, they had said that they did not mind, for they should discover me at last.

They continued their search; and this deranged all my plans, for, masked under the name of Jacquelin, I saw myself reduced to quit it, and once more renounce the industrious trade which I had created.

No passport, however good, could protect me through the districts which I usually travelled over; and in those where I was unknown, my unusual appearance would most probably excite suspicion. The crisis was horridly critical. What could I do? This was my only thought, when chance introduced me to

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a tailor of the Cour Saint Martin, who was desirous of selling his business. I treated with him, persuaded that I could nowhere be so safe as in the heart of a capital, where it is easy to lose oneself amid the crowded population. Eight months elapsed, and nothing disturbed the tranquillity enjoyed by my mother, Annette, and myself. My trade prospered, and every day augmented it; nor did I confine myself, as my predecessor had done, to the making up of clothes, but traded also in cloths, and was perhaps on the road to fortune, when one morning all my troubles were renewed.

I was in my warehouse, when a messenger came to me, and said I was wanted at a coffee-house in the Rue Aumaire, and thinking that it was some matter of business, I immediately went to the place appointed. I was taken into a private room, and there found two fugitives from the Bagne at Brest; one of them was that Blondy who aided my unfortunate escape from Pont-a-Luzen. "We have been here these ten days," said he to me, "and have not a sous. Yesterday we saw you in a warehouse, that we learnt was your own, which gave us much pleasure; and I said to my friend, 'Let us now cast off all care;' for we know that you are not the man to leave old comrades in difficulty."

The idea of seeing myself in the power of two ruffians, whom I knew capable of the vilest deeds, even of selling me to the police to make a profit of me, although they injured themselves, was overwhelming. I did not fail to express my pleasure at seeing them, adding, that I was not rich, and regretting that it was only in my power to give them fifty francs. They appeared content with this sum; and on leaving me, expressed their intention to depart at once for Chalons-sur-Marne, where they said they had business. I should have been but too fortunate had they at once quitted Paris, but on bidding me adieu, they promised soon to see me again, and I

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remained tormented with the dread of their return. Would they not consider me as a milch-cow, and make the most of their power over me? Would they not be insatiable? Who could answer that their demands would be limited to my means? I already saw myself the banker of these gentlemen and many others; for it was to be presumed, that, in conformity with the custom of these thieves, if I satisfied them, they would introduce their friends to me, who would also draw upon me, and I should only be on good terms with them till my first refusal, and after that they would without doubt serve me a villainous trick. With such blood-hounds let loose upon me, it may be imagined that I was but ill at ease! It must be allowed that my situation was an unpleasant one, but it was crowned with a rencontre which made it still worse.

It may or may not be remembered that my wife, after her divorce, had married again, and I thought she was in the department of the Pas-de-Calais, entirely occupied in being happy and making her new husband so, when, in the Rue du Petit-Carreau, I met her, face to face; and it was impossible to pass her, for she at once recognised me. I spoke to her, without alluding to the wrongs she had done me; and as the dilapidation of her dress evinced that she was not in very flourishing circumstances, I gave her some money. She perhaps imagined that it was an interested generosity, but it certainly was not. It never occurred to me that the ex-madame Vidocq would denounce me. In truth, in recurring at a later period to our old wrangles, I thought that my heart had only given me prudential suggestions, and then approved of what I had done; it appeared most proper that this female, in her distress, should rely on me for some assistance. Detained in or far from Paris, I was anxious to relieve her misery. This should have been a consideration to determine her to preserve silence; and I at least thought so. We shall see whether or not I was deceived in my expectation.

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The support of my ex-wife was an expense to which I reconciled myself; but of this charge I did not as yet know the whole weight. A fortnight had elapsed since our interview; when one morning I was sent for to the Rue de l'Echiquier, and on going there, and at the bottom of a court, in a ground-floor room, very clean, but meanly furnished, I saw again, not only my wife, but also her nieces and their father, the terrorist Chevalier, who had just been freed from an imprisonment of six months, for stealing plate. A glance was sufficient to assure me that I had now the whole family on my hands. They were in a state of the most complete destitution; I hated them and cursed them, and yet I could do nothing better than extend my hand to them. I drained myself for them, for to have driven them to despair would have brought on my own ruin; and rather than return to the power of the police, I resolved on sacrificing my last sous.

At this period it seemed as if the whole world was leagued against me; I was compelled to draw my purse-strings at every moment, and for whom? For creatures who, looking on my liberality as compulsory, were prepared to betray me as soon as I ceased to be a certain source of reliance. When I went home from my wife's, I had still another proof of the wretchedness affixed to the state of a fugitive galley-slave. Annette and my mother were in tears. During my absence, two drunken men had asked for me, and on being told that I was from home, they had broke forth in oaths and threats which left me no longer in doubt of the perfidy of their intentions. By the description which Annette gave me of these two individuals, I easily recognised Blondy and his comrade Deluc. I had no trouble in guessing their names; and besides, they had left an address, with a formal injunction to send them forty francs, which was more than enough to disclose to me who they were, as there were not in Paris any other persons who could send me such an intimation. I was obedient, very obedient; only in

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paying my contribution to these two scoundrels, I could not help letting them know how inconsiderately they had behaved. "Consider what a step you have taken," said I to them; "they know nothing at my house, and you have told all; my wife, who carries on the concern in her name, will perhaps turn me out, and then I must be reduced to the lowest ebb of misery."—"Oh you can come and rob with us," answered the two rascals.

I endeavoured to convince them how much better it was to owe an existence to honest toil, than to be in incessant fear from the police, which sooner or later catches all malefactors in its nets. I added that one crime generally leads to another; that he would risk his neck who ran straight towards the guillotine; and the termination of my discourse was, that they would do well to renounce the dangerous career on which they had entered.

"Not so bad!" cried Blondy, when I had finished my lecture, "not so bad! But can you in the mean time point out to us any apartment that we can ransack? We are, you see, like Harlequin, and have more need of cash than advice;" and they left me, laughing deridingly at me. I called them back, to profess my attachment to them, and begged them not to call again at my house. "If that is all," said Deluc, "we will keep from that."—"Oh yes, we'll keep away," added Blondy, "since that is unpleasant to your mistress."

But the latter did not stay away long: the very next day at nightfall he presented himself at my warehouse, and asked to speak to me privately. I took him into my own room. "We are alone?" said he to me, looking round at the room in which we were; and when he was assured that he had no witnesses, he drew from his pocket eleven silver forks and two gold watches, which he placed on a stand. "Four hundred francs for this would not be too much—the silver plate and the gold watches—Come, tip us the needful."—"Four hundred francs!" said I, alarmed at so abrupt a total.

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"I have not so much money."—"Never mind. Go and sell the goods."—"But if it should be known?" "That's your affair; I want the ready; or if you like it better, I'll send you customers from the police office—you know what a word would do—Come, come, the cash, the chink, and no gammon." I understood the scoundrel but too well: I saw myself denounced, dragged from the state into which I had installed myself, and led back to the Bagne. I counted out the four hundred francs.

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CHAPTER XXII.

Another robber—My wicker car—Arrest of two galley-slaves—Fearful discovery — St. Germain wishes to involve me in a robbery—I offer to serve the police—Horrid perplexities—They wish to take me whilst in bed—My concealment—A comic adventure—Disguises on disguises—Chevalier has denounced me—Annette at the depot of the Prefecture—I prepare to leave Paris—Two passers of false money—I am apprehended in my shirt—I am conducted to the Bicêtre.

I was a receiver of stolen goods! a criminal, in spite of myself! But yet I was one, for I had lent a hand to crime. No hell can be imagined equal to the torment in which I now existed. I was incessantly agitated; remorse and fear assailed me at once night and day; at each moment I was on the rack. I did not sleep, I had no appetite, the cares of business were no longer attended to, all was hateful to me. All! no, I had Annette and my mother with me. But should I not be forced to abandon them? Sometimes I trembled at the thoughts of my apprehension, and my home was transformed into a filthy dungeon; sometimes it was surrounded by the police, and their pursuit laid open proofs of a misdeed which would draw down on me the vengeance of the laws. Harassed by the family of Chevalier, who devoured my substance; tormented by Blondy, who was never wearied with applying to me for money; dreading all that could occur, that was most horrible and incurable, in my situation; ashamed of the tyranny exercised over me by the vilest wretches that disgraced the earth; irritated that I could not burst through the moral chain which irrevocably bound me to the opprobrium of the human race; I was driven to the brink of despair, and, for eight days, pondered in my head the direst purposes. Blondy, the wretch Blondy, was the especial object of my wrathful indignation; I could have strangled him with all my heart, and yet I still kept on terms with him, still had a

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welcome for him. Impetuous and violent as I was by nature, it was astonishing how much patient endurance I exercised; but it was all owing to Annette. Oh! how I prayed with fervent sincerity, that, in one of his frequent excursions, some friendly gendarme might drive a bullet through Blondy's brain! I even trusted that it was an event that would soon occur; but every time that a more extended absence began to inspire me with the hope that I was at length freed from this wretch, he again appeared, and brought with him a renewal of all my cares.

One day I saw him come with Deluc and an ex-clerk, named St. Germain, whom I had known at Rouen; where, like many others, he had barely the reputation of an honest man. St. Germain, who had only known me as the merchant Blondel, was much astonished at the meeting; but two words from Blondy explained my whole history.—I was a thorough rogue. Confidence then replaced astonishment; and St. Germain, who at first had frowned, joined in the mirth. Blondy told me, that they were going all three to set out for the environs of Senlis, and asked me for the loan of my wicker car, which I made use of when visiting the fairs. Glad to get rid of these fellows on such terms, I hastily wrote a note to the person who had charge of it. He gave them the conveyance and harness, and away they went; whilst for ten days I heard nothing of them, when St. Germain re-appeared. He entered my house one morning with an alarmed look, and an appearance of much fatigue. "Well," said he, "my comrades have been seized."—"Seized!" cried I, with a joy which I could not repress; but assuming all my coolness, I asked for the details, with an affectation of being greatly concerned. St. Germain told me, in few words, that Blondy and Deluc had only been apprehended because they travelled without credentials. I did not believe anything he said, and had no doubt but they had been engaged in some robbery; and what confirmed my suspicions was, that, on

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proposing to send them some money, St. Germain told me that they were not in want of any. On leaving Paris, they had fifty francs amongst them; and certainly with so small a sum, it would have been a difficult matter to have gone on for a fortnight; and yet how was it that they were still not unprovided? The first idea that flashed through my brain, was, that they had committed some extensive robbery, which they wished to conceal from me; but I soon discovered that the business was of still more serious nature.

Two days after St. Germain's return, I thought I would go and look at my car; and remarked, at first, that they had altered its exterior appearance. On getting inside, I saw on the lining of white and blue striped ticken, red spots, recently washed out; and then opening the seat, to take out the key, I found it filled with blood, as if a carcass had been laid there! All was now apparent, and the truth was exposed, even more horrible than my suspicions had foreboded. I did not hesitate; far more interested than the murderers themselves in getting rid of all traces of the deed, on the next night I took the vehicle to the banks of the Seine, and having got as far as Bercy, in a lone spot, I set fire to some straw and dry wood, with which I had filled it, and did not leave the spot until the whole was burnt to ashes.

St. Germain, to whom I spoke of the circumstances, without adding that I had burnt my carriage, confessed that the dead body of a waggoner, assassinated by Blondy, between Louvres and Dammartin, had been concealed in it, until they found an opportunity of throwing it into a well. This man, one of the most abandoned villains I ever encountered, spoke of the deed as if it were a most harmless action; and a laugh was on his lips while he related the facts with the most unembarrassed and easy tone. I was horrified, and listened with a sort of stupefaction; and when he asked me for the impression of the lock of an apartment with which I was acquainted, I reached the cli-

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max of my terrors. I made some observations, to which he replied, "What is that to me?—business must be done—Because you know him! Why that is the stronger reason; you know all the ways of the house; you can guide me, and we will share the produce!—Come, it is no use refusing; I must have the impression." I pretended to yield to his arguments. "Such scruples as these—hold your tongue!" replied St. Germain; "you make me sweat (the expression he used was not quite so proper.) But come—all is agreed, and half the plunder is yours." Good God! what an associate! I had no cause to rejoice at Blondy's mishap; I really got rid of a fever and fell into an ague. Blondy would yield to persuasion on certain terms, but St. Germain never; and he was even more imperious in his demands. Exposed to see myself compromised from one moment to another, I determined to see M. Henry, chief of the division of security in the prefecture of police. I went to him; and having unfolded my situation to him, declared that if he would tolerate my residence at Paris, I would give him exact information of a great many fugitive galley-slaves, with whose retreats and plans I was well acquainted.

M. Henry received me with much kindness; but having for a moment reflected on what I had said, answered that he could not enter into any terms with me. "That should not prevent your giving the information," he continued, "and we can then judge how useful it may be; and perhaps . . . ."—"Ah, sir, no perhaps, that would risk my life. You are not ignorant of what those individuals are capable whom you denounce; and if I must be led back to the Bagne after some part of an accusation has stated that I have made communications to the police, I am a dead man."—"Under these circumstances, let us speak no further on the subject;" and he left me, without even asking my name.

I was deeply grieved at the ill success of my propo-

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sition. St. Germain was about to return and demand the performance of my promise. What was I to do? Ought I to inform the individual, that we were about to rob him together? If it had been possible to have avoided accompanying St. Germain, it would not have been so dangerous to have given such notice; but I had promised to assist him, and had no pretext for getting off from my promise, and I waited for him as I should have done for a sentence of death. One, two, three weeks passed in these perplexities, and at the end of this time I began to breathe again; and when two months had elapsed, was perfectly at my ease, thinking that he had been apprehended, as well as his two companions. Annette (I shall always remember it) made a nine days' vow, and burnt at least a dozen wax candles in token of joy. "I pray to heaven," she sometimes said, "that they may continue where they are." The torment had been of long duration, but the moments of calm were brief, and they preceded the catastrophe which decided my existence.

The 3d of May, 1809, at daybreak I was awakened by several knocks at my warehouse door; and going down to see, was on the point of opening the door, when I heard some voices in conversation in a low tone. "He is a powerful man," said one; "we must be wary!" There was no doubt concerning the motives of this early visit, and I returned hastily to my chamber, told Annette what had passed, and opening the window, whilst she entered into conversation with the officers, I glided out in my shirt, by a door which opened on the staircase, and soon reached the upper story; at the fourth I saw an open door and entered, looked about me, listened, and found I was alone. In a recess in the wall was a bed, hidden by a ragged crimson damask curtain. Pressed by circumstances, and sure that the staircase was guarded, I threw myself beneath the mattress; but scarcely had I lain down when some one entered, whom I recog-

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nised to be a young man named Fossé, whose father, a brass-worker, was lying in an adjacent room, and a dialogue thus began:—

SCENE THE FIRST.

FATHER, MOTHER, AND SON.

SON. "What do you think, father? They are looking for the tailor—they want to seize him—all the house is in an uproar—Do you hear the bell? Hark! hark! they are ringing at the watchmaker's."

MOTHER. "Let them ring—do not you meddle in business that does not concern you;—(*to her husband*) Come, father, dress; they will soon be here."

FATHER. (*Yawning, and, as I imagined, rubbing his eyes.*) "The devil fetch them—what do they want with the tailor?"

SON. "I do not know, father; but there are lots of them—bailiffs and gendarmes, and a commissary with them."

FATHER. "Perhaps it is nothing at all."

MOTHER. "But what can they want with the tailor? What can he have done?"

FATHER. "What can he have done? Since he sells cloth, he may have made clothes of English goods."

MOTHER. "He may have employed foreign goods! You make me laugh at you. Do you think he would be apprehended for that?"

FATHER. "Yes, I think they would apprehend him for that, and the continental blockade."

SON. "Continental blockade! What do you mean by that, father? What has that to do with the matter?"

MOTHER. "Oh yes! Tell us then, what will be the end of this; and let us know the truth of it all."

FATHER. "The meaning of all this;—that perhaps they will make the tailor a head shorter."

MOTHER. "Good God! poor man! I am sure they

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will take him away—criminals, like him, are not guilty; and if it only depended on me, I know I would hide them all in my chemise."

FATHER. "Do you not know the tailor is a large fellow?—he has a famous body of his own."

MOTHER. "Never mind, I would hide him. I wish he would come here. Do you remember the deserter?"

FATHER. "Hush, hush! Here they come."

SCENE THE SECOND.

ENTER THE COMMISSARY, GENDARMES, AND THEIR ATTENDANTS.

At this moment the commissary and his staff, having traversed the house from top to bottom, reached the fourth story.

COMMISSARY. "Ah! the door is open. I beg pardon for disturbing you, but the interest of society demands it. You have a neighbour, a very bad man, a man who would kill either father or mother."

WIFE. "What, Monsieur Vidocq?"

COMMISSARY. "Yes, madam, Vidocq; and I charge you, in case you or your husband have given him shelter, to tell me without delay."

WIFE. "Ah, Monsieur le Commissaire, you may look everywhere if you please. We give shelter to any one who—"

COMMISSARY. "Ah, you should beware, for the law is very severe in this particular. It is a subject on which there is no joking! You would subject yourselves to very severe punishment; for a man condemned to capital punishment, it would be nothing less than——"

HUSBAND (*quickly*). "We are not afraid of that, Monsieur Commissaire."

COMMISSARY. "I believe you, and rely on you. However, that I may have nothing to reproach myself with, you will permit me to make a slight search, just

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a simple formality. (*Addressing his attendants.*) Gentlemen, are the egresses well guarded?"

After a very minute search of the inner room, the commissary returned to that in which I was. "And in this bed," said he, raising the tattered damask curtains, whilst at my feet I felt one of the corners of the mattress shake, which they let fall carelessly, "there is no Vidocq here. Come, he must have made himself invisible; we must give over our search." It may be imagined that I felt overjoyed at these words, which removed an enormous weight from my mind. At length all the alguazils retired, the brass-worker's wife attending them with much politeness, and I was left alone with the father and son, and a little child, who did not think that I was so near them. I heard them pitying me; but Madame Fossé soon ran up the staircase, four steps at a time, until she was quite out of breath, and I still was the theme of conversation.

SCENE THE THIRD.

THE HUSBAND, WIFE, AND SON.

WIFE. "Oh my God! my God! how many people there are in the street. Ah! they say fine things about M. Vidocq; they talk much, and all sorts of things. However, there must be some of it true; never so much smoke without some fire. I knew very well that this Monsieur Vidocq was a proud chap for a master-tailor. His arms were crossed much more frequently than his legs."

HUSBAND. "There you go, like all the rest, with your suppositions; you are a slanderous woman now. Besides, it is no business of ours; and suppose that it did concern us, of what do they accuse him, what do they chatter about? I am not curious."

WIFE. "What do they chatter about! Why the very thoughts on't make me tremble, when they say he is a man condemned to death for having killed a man.

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I wish you could hear the little tailor who lives lower down."

HUSBAND. "Oh, he speaks from a professional jealousy."

WIFE. "And the porteress at No. 27, who speaks of what she knows well, says, that she has seen him go out every evening with a thick stick, so well disguised that she did not know him."

HUSBAND. "The porteress says that?"

WIFE. "And that he went to lay wait for the people in the Champs Elysées."

HUSBAND. "Are you growing foolish?"

WIFE. "Ah, is that foolish! The cook-shopman, perhaps, is foolish, when he says that they were all robbers who came in, and that he had seen M. Vidocq with some very ill-looking fellows."

HUSBAND. "Well! who had ill looks after ——"

WIFE. "After all, he is, said the commissary to the grocer, a worthless man; and worse than that, for he added that he was a vile criminal, and justice could not get hold of him."

HUSBAND. "And you talk nonsense; you believe the commissary because he is beating up our quarters; but I will never be persuaded that M. Vidocq is a dishonest man. I think, on the other hand, that he is a good fellow, a punctual man. Besides, whatever he may be, it is no business of ours; let us meddle with our own affairs, and time wags onward;—we must to work; come, quickly, to work, to work."

The sitting was adjourned; father, mother, son, and little daughter, all the Fossé family, went away, and I remained locked up, reflecting on the perfidious insinuations of the police, who, to deprive me of the aid of my neighbours, represented me as an infamous villain. I have often seen, subsequently, this species of tactics employed, the success of which is always founded on atrocious calumnies and measures, revolting because unjust; clumsy, because they produce an effect entirely contrary to that which is expected, for those persons

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who would exert themselves personally in the apprehension of a thief, are prevented from fear of struggling with a man, whom the feeling of crime and the prospect of a scaffold drives probably to despair.

I had been shut up for two hours; there was no noise either in the house or in the street, and the groups had dispersed; I was beginning to take courage, when I heard a key thrust into the lock, and whilst I again squatted beneath the coverlid, the father, mother, son, and daughter Fossé entered.

The father and son were quarrelling, and, by the interference of the mother I had no doubt but blows would arise, when, throwing aside the tattered curtains, I made my appearance in the midst of the astonished family. It may be imagined how much the good folks were surprised. Whilst they were looking at me without saying a word, I told them as briefly as possible how I had got amongst them; how I had concealed myself under the mattress, &c. The husband and wife were astonished that I had not been stifled in my place of concealment; they pitied me, and with a cordiality not uncommon amongst people of their class, offered me refreshments which were necessary after so painful a morning.

It may be supposed that I was on thorns during the progress of the whole affair; I perspired copiously; at any other moment I should have been amused; but when I reflected on the inevitable results of a discovery, none less than myself could appreciate the burlesque of my situation. Supposing myself lost, I would have expedited the fatal moment, it would have cut short my train of perplexities; a reflection on the mobility of circumstances determined me to wait the event; I knew from more than one hour of experience, that the best contrived schemes of man are disconcerted, and sometimes we triumph over the most desperate cases.

After the reception afforded me by the Fossé family, it was probable that I should have no reason to repent

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of having waited patiently for results. However, I was not yet fully assured: this family was not well off; and it might happen that the first impression of kindness and compassion which the most perverse persons sometimes evince, would give place to the hope of obtaining some reward by surrendering me to the police; and then supposing my hosts to be what is called "staunch," yet an indiscreet expression might betray me. Without being endowed with much penetration, Fossé guessed the secret of my uneasiness, which he succeeded in dissipating by protestations too sincere to be doubted.

He undertook to watch over my safety, and began by disclaiming any return for his kindness, and then informed me, that the police agents had fixed themselves in the house and the adjoining streets, and intended to pay a second visit to all the lodgers of the house. On these statements I judged that it was imperative on me to get away, for they would doubtlessly this time ransack all the apartments.

The Fossé family, like many other of the work-people of Paris, used to sup at a wine shop in the vicinity, where they carried their provisions, and it was agreed that I should seize on that moment to go out with them. Till night I had time to form my plans, and was first occupied with thinking how I should obtain intelligence of Annette, when Fossé undertook this for me. It would have been the height of imprudence to have communicated directly with her, and he thus contrived it. He went into the Rue de Grammont, where he bought a pie, into which he introduced the note that follows:—

"I am in safety. Be careful of yourself, and trust no one. Do not attend to promises from persons who have neither the intention nor the power of serving you. Confine yourself to these four words: 'I do not know.' Play the fool, which will be the best proof of your sense. I cannot meet you; but when you go

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out, always go through the Rue St. Martin and the Boulevards. Mind, do not return; I will answer for all."

The pie, intrusted to a messenger of the Place Vendôme, and addressed to madame Vidocq, fell, as I had foreseen, into the hands of the agents, who allowed it to be delivered, after having read the despatch; and thus I attained two ends at once, that of deceiving them, by persuading them that I was not in that quarter, and that of assuring Annette that I was out of danger. My expedient succeeded, and emboldened by my first success, I was more calm in making preparations for my retreat. Some money, which I had snatched by chance from my night-table, served to procure me pantaloons, stockings, and shoes, a frock, and a blue cotton cap, intended to complete my disguise. When supper-hour came, I left the room with all the family, carrying on my head, as a precaution, a large dish of harrico mutton, the appetizing fumes of which sufficiently explained the intent of our excursion. My heart did not beat less anxiously when I met, face to face on the second floor, a police-officer, whom I did not at first perceive, as he was ensconced in a corner. "Put out your candle," cried he abruptly to Fossé. "Why?" replied he, who had only taken a light that it might not awaken suspicion. "Go along and ask no questions," said the fellow, blowing out the candle himself. I could have hugged him! In the passage we met several of his comrades, who, more polite than he, made way for us to pass. At length we got out, and the moment we turned the angle of the street, Fossé took the dish from me, and we parted. That I might not attract attention, I walked very slowly to the Rue des Fontaines; but when once there, I did not amuse myself, as the Germans say, in counting my buttons, but directed my steps towards the Boulevard of the Temple, and running rapidly, reached the Rue de Bondy, without thinking of asking where I was.

However, it was not enough to have escaped a first

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pursuit; for doubtless other searches more active would be instituted. It was necessary to mislead the police, whose numerous bloodhounds, according to custom, would leave all other business, and occupy themselves solely in hunting for me. At this critical juncture I resolved to make use of those persons for my safety whom I considered as my denouncers. These were the Chevaliers, whom I had seen on the previous evening, and who in conversation had dropped some of those words which make no impression at the time, but which we reflect upon afterwards. Convinced that I had no terms to keep henceforward with these wretched beings, I determined to avenge myself on them, whilst I compelled them to refund all that I could enforce from them. It was on a tacit understanding that I had obliged them; and they had violated the faith of treaties, even against their own interest; they had done wrong; and I intended to punish them for having mistaken their own interest.

The road is not far from the Boulevard to the Rue de l'Echiquier, and I fell like a bomb-shell on Chevalier's domicile, whose surprise at seeing me at liberty confirmed my suspicions. He pretended at first an excuse for going out; but, double-locking the door, and putting the key in my pocket, I seized on a knife lying on the table, and told my brother-in-law that if he uttered a cry it was all over with him and his family. This threat could not fail to produce the due effect: I was with people who knew me, and who feared the violence of my despair. The women were more dead than alive, and Chevalier, petrified and motionless as the stone-vessel on which he leant, asked me, with a faint voice, what I wanted from him? "You shall know," answered I.

I began by asking for a complete suit of clothes, with which I had provided him the month previously, and he gave it to me: I made him also give me a shirt, boots, and a hat; all of which having been purchased with my means, my demand was only for

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restitution. Chevalier did all this with a stern look, and I thought I read in his eyes the meditation of some project; it might be that he intended to let his neighbours know by some means the embarrassment into which my presence threw him, and prudence demanded that I should ensure a retreat in case of a nocturnal visit. A window looking on a garden, was closed by two iron bars; I ordered Chevalier to take one of them out; and as, in spite of my directions, he was exceedingly awkward about it, I took the work in hand myself, without his perceiving that I had laid down the knife which had inspired him with so much fear. The operation ended, I again took up the weapon: "And now," said I to him and the terrified women, "you may go to bed." As for me, I was hardly inclined to sleep, and threw myself into a chair, where I passed a very agitated night. All the vicissitudes of my life passed in review before me, and I did not doubt that a curse hung over me: in vain did I fly from crime, crime came to seek me; and this fatality against which I struggled with all the energy of my character, seemed to delight in overturning my plans of conduct, in incessantly placing me in contact with infamy and imperious necessity.

At break of day I roused Chevalier, and asked him what money he had, and on his replying that he only had a few pieces of money, I desired him to take four silver knives and forks, which I had given him, to take his permit of residence, and to follow me. I had no need of him, but it would have been dangerous to leave him at home, for he might have informed the police, and directed them on my route, before I had concerted my plans. Chevalier obeyed, and I was not very fearful of the women, as I took so precious a hostage with me; and as, besides, they did not precisely partake of his feelings. I contented myself on going out by double-locking the door, and we reached the Champs Elysées by the most deserted streets of the capital, even in daytime. It was four o'clock in the

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morning, and we met nobody. I carried the knives and forks, which I took good care not to trust to my companion, as I wanted to get off without inconvenience in case he should turn upon me or create a disturbance. Fortunately he was very quiet, for I had the terrible knife, and Chevalier, who never reasoned, felt persuaded that at the least motion he should make, I would stab him to the heart; and this salutary dread, which he felt the more deeply as it was not undeserved, kept him in check.

We walked for some time in the environs, and Chevalier, who did not foresee how this was to end, walked mechanically beside me, like one bewildered and idiotic. At eight o'clock I made him get into a coach and conducted him to the passage of the wood of Boulogne, where he pledged, in my presence, and under his own name, the four knives and forks, on which they lent him a hundred francs. I took the sum, and, satisfied with having so conveniently recovered in a lump what he had extorted from me in detail, I got into the coach with him once more, which I stopped at the Place de la Concorde. There I alighted, after having given him this piece of advice—"Mind and be more circumspect than ever; if I am arrested, whoever is the cause, look to yourself." I desired the coachman to drive on to Rue de l'Echiquier, No. 23; and to be sure that he took no other direction, I remained for a short time on the watch; and then jumping into a cabriolet, I went to a clothesman of the Croix-Rouge, who gave me the clothes of a workman in exchange for my own. In this new costume I walked towards the Esplanade des Invalides, to learn if it were possible to purchase a uniform of this establishment. A wooden-legged man, whom I questioned, directed me to Rue St. Dominique, where, at a broker's, I should find a complete outfit. This broker was, it appeared, a chattering fellow. "I am not inquisitive," said he—(that is the preamble to all impertinent inquiries)—"You have all your limbs; I presume the uniform is

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not for yourself."—"It is," said I; and as he testified astonishment, I added that I was going to act in a play. —"And in what piece?"—"In l'Amour Filial."

The bargain concluded, I immediately set out for Passy, where, at the house of a friend, I hastened to effect my metamorphose. In less than five minutes I was converted into the most maimed of invalids; my arm laid over the hollow of the breast, and kept close to my body by a girth and the waistband of my breeches, had entirely disappeared; some ribbons introduced into the upper part of one of the sleeves, the end of which was hung to a button in front, joined a stump admirably deceptive, and which made the disguise most efficient; a dye which I used to stain my hair and whiskers black, perfected my disguise, under which I was so sure of misleading the physiognomical knowledge of the observers in the quarter St. Martin, that I ventured there that same evening. I learnt that the police not only still kept possession of my abode, but were making an inventory of the goods and furniture. By the number of officers whom I saw going and coming, it was easy to perceive that the search was prosecuted with a renewal of activity very extraordinary at this period, when the vigilant administration was not too zealous unless it were in cases of political arrests. Alarmed at such an appearance of investigation, any one but myself would have judged it prudent to leave Paris without delay, at least for a time. It would have been best perhaps to allow the storm to blow over; but I could not resolve on forsaking Annette in the midst of her troubles, caused by her attachment to me. At this time she must have suffered much; shut up in the depot of the prefecture, she was placed in solitary confinement for twenty-five days, whence she was only taken to be threatened with being left to rot in St. Lazarre, if she would not confess the place of my retreat. But with a dagger at her breast, Annette would not have betrayed me. It may be judged how deeply I was grieved to learn her wretched

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situation and yet be unable to deliver her. As soon as it depended on me, I hastened to aid her. A friend to whom I had lent a few hundred francs, having returned them to me, I begged him to retain a portion of the sum; and full of hope that the term of her detention would soon expire, since, after all, they had only to reproach her with having lived with a fugitive galley-slave, I prepared to quit Paris, determining, if she was not set at liberty before my departure, that I would let her know, by some means, where I had betaken myself.

I lodged in the Rue Tiquetonne, at the house of a currier, named Bouhin, who undertook, for a compensation, to get for himself a passport which he would give to me. We were exactly alike: he, like me, was fair, with blue eyes, coloured complexion, and, by a singular chance, had on his upper lip a slight cicatrice. He was however shorter than I was, and to increase his height so as to reach mine, he put two or three packs of cards in his shoes. Bouhin had recourse to this expedient; so that, although I could use the strange faculty I had of reducing my height four or five inches, at pleasure, the passport which he procured did not need that I should have recourse to this curtailment of my fair proportions. Provided with this, I was congratulating myself on a resemblance which ensured my liberty, when Bouhin (after I had been at his house eight days) confided to me a secret which made me tremble. He was a forger of false money, and, to give me a sample of his skill, coined in my presence eight five-franc pieces, which his wife passed the same day. It may be believed that the confidence of Bouhin alarmed me.

At first I argued that actually from one moment to another, his passport would become but a bad recommendation in the eyes of the gendarmes; for from the trade he carried on, Bouhin must sooner or later be the object of an arrest; besides, the money I had

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given him was but a rash adventure, and it must be confessed that I had but a small chance of advantage in personating such a character. This was not all; considering that this state of suspicion, which, in the opinion of the judge and of the public is always inseparable from the condition of a fugitive galley-slave, was it not likely that if Bouhin were apprehended as a coiner, I should be considered as his accomplice? Justice has committed many errors! Condemned once, though innocent, who would answer that I should not a second time be similarly sentenced? The crime which had been wrongfully imputed to me, inasmuch as it pronounced me a forger, was nominally the same species of crime as that which Bouhin had committed. I saw myself sinking beneath a weight of presumptive evidence and appearances, such as, perhaps, my counsel, ashamed of undertaking my defence, would conceive necessary to impel him to throw me on the pity of my judges. I heard my death-sentence pronounced. My fears redoubled when I learnt that Bouhin had an associate, a doctor, named Terrier, who frequently came to his house. This man had a most hanging look, and it seemed to me that on only looking at him, all the police-officers in the world would have suspected and watched him. Without knowing him, I should have thought that in following him it would be impossible not to attain the knowledge of some perpetrated or intended crime. In a word, he was a bird of ill omen to every place he entered; and persuaded that his visits would bring mischief to the house, I persuaded Bouhin to give up a business so hazardous as that he followed; but the most cogent reasons prevailed not with him; all I could obtain by dint of entreaty was, that to avoid giving rise to a search which would certainly betray me to the police, he would suspend the making and the passing of money as long as I should remain with him; but this promise did not prevent my discovering him two days after-

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wards hard at work. This time I thought it best to address his fellow-labourer, to whom I represented, in the most glaring colours, the dangers which he ran. "I see," answered the doctor, "that you are one of those cowardly fellows of whom there are so great a number. Suppose we are detected, what then? There are many others who make their exit at the Place de Grève, and we are not there yet; for fifteen years I have used these 'chamber gentlemen' as my bankers, and nobody has yet doubted me; it will do yet. And besides, my friend," he added, in an ill-humoured tone, "do you meddle with your own affairs."

After the turn which this discussion took, I saw that it would be superfluous to continue it, and that I should do wisely to be on my guard, feeling still more the necessity of quitting Paris as speedily as possible. It was Tuesday, and I purposed starting on the following day; but having learnt that Annette would be set at liberty at the end of the week, I proposed deferring my departure until her release, when on Friday, about three o'clock in the morning, I heard a light knock at the street-door. The nature of the rap, the hour, and circumstance, all combined to make me think that they were coming to take me; and saying nothing to Bouhin, I went out on the staircase, and getting to the top, I got hold of the gutter, and climbing on the roof, hastened to conceal myself behind a stack of chimnies.

My presentiments had not deceived me, and in an instant the house was filled with police-agents, who searched everywhere. Surprised at not finding me, and doubtless informed by my clothes, left near my bed, that I had escaped in my shirt, which would not allow me to go far, they imagined that I could not have escaped by the usual way. For want of cavaliers to send in pursuit of me, they sent for some bricklayers, who went all over the roof, where I was found and seized, without the nature of the place allowing me to offer any resistance, which could only have been

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done at the risk of a most perilous leap. Except a few cuffs, which the agents bestowed on me, my arrest offered nothing remarkable. Conducted to the prefecture, I was interrogated by M. Henry, who remembering perfectly the offer I had made him some months previously, promised to do all in his power to ease my situation; but still I was taken to the Force, and thence to Bicêtre, to await the departure of the next chain of galley-slaves.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

A plan of escape—New proposal to M. Henry—My agreement with the police—Important discoveries—Coco Lacour—A band of robbers—The inspectors under lock and key—The old clothes woman and the assassins—A pretended escape.

I BEGAN to grow wearied of escapes and the sort of liberty they procured for me; I did not wish to return to the Bagne; but I preferred a residence at Toulon to that in Paris, if I were compelled to submit to such creatures as Chevalier, Blondy, Deluc, and St. Germain. I was in this mood in the midst of a considerable number of these supporters of the galleys, whom I had had but too many opportunities of knowing, when several of them proposed that I should help them in trying for a run through the court of the Bons Pauvres. At any other time the project would have made me smile. I did not decline it; but I studied it like a man who considered localities, and so as to preserve for myself that preponderance which my real successes procured for me, and those which were attributed to me—I might say those which I attributed to myself; for as soon as we live amongst rogues, there is always an advantage in passing for the most wicked and the most clever; and such was my well-established reputation, wherever there were four prisoners at least three had heard of me;—not at all an extraordinary thing, for there were galley-slaves who assumed my name. I was the general to whom all the deeds of his soldiers is attributed; they did not cite the places I had taken by assault, but there was no gaoler whose vigilance I could not escape, no irons that I could not break through, no wall that I could not penetrate. I was no less famed for courage and skill, and it was the general opinion that I was capable of any deed of renown in case of need. At Brest, at Toulon, at Rochefort, at Anvers, in fact everywhere, I was

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considered amongst robbers as the most cunning and most bold. The most villanous sought my friendship, because they thought there was still something to be learnt from me, and the greatest novices collected my very words as instructions from which they could gather profit. At Bicêtre, I had a complete court, and they pressed around me, surrounded me, and made tenders of services and kind offers, and expressed regards of which it would be difficult to form an idea. But now, this prison glory was hateful to me: the more I read the souls of malefactors, the more they laid themselves open to me, the more I pitied society for having nourished in its bosom such offspring. I no longer felt that sentiment of the community of misfortune which had formerly inspired my breast; cruel experience and a riper age had convinced me of the necessity of withdrawing myself from these brigands, whose society I loathed, and whose language was an abomination to me. Decided, at any event, to take part against them for the interest of honest men, I wrote to M. Henry to offer my services afresh, without any other condition than that of not being taken back to the Bagne, resigning myself to finish the duration of my sentence in any prison that might be selected.

My letter pointed out so fully the information I could supply, that M. Henry was struck with it: one only consideration balanced with him; it was the example of many accused or condemned persons, who having engaged to guide the police in its searches, had only given but trifling information, or had even finished themselves by being detected in criminal deeds. To this powerful argument, I opposed the cause of my condemnation, the regularity of my conduct after my escapes, the constancy of my endeavours to procure an honourable existence, and finally I produced my correspondence, my books, my punctuality, and credit, and I called for the testimony of all persons with whom I had transacted business, and particularly of

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my creditors, who had all the greatest confidence in me.

Amongst other papers which I produced was the following, which I here transcribe, because it relates to the reasons of my condemnation, at the same time that it proves the steps taken in my favour by the attorney-general Ranson, during my detention at Douai.

"Douai, le 20 Janvier, 1809.

"The Attorney-General Imperial at the court of criminal justice of the department of the North,

"Attests, that the said Vidocq was condemned the 7 Nivose, year 5, to eight years of imprisonment for having forged a pardon.

"That it appears that Vidocq was imprisoned on a charge of insubordination, or other military offence, and that the forgery for which he was sentenced was only intended to aid the escape of a fellow-prisoner.

"The attorney-general attests also, that after the deposition taken by him at the office of the Court, the said Vidocq escaped at the moment they were about to transfer him to the Bagne; that he was retaken and again escaped, and being again retaken, M. Ranson, then attorney-general, had the honour of writing to his excellency the minister of justice to consult him on the question, whether the time elapsed from the condemnation of Vidocq to his re-apprehension might count as freeing him from punishment.

"That a first letter being unanswered, M. Ranson wrote several; and Vidocq interpreting the silence of his excellency as unfavourable, again effected an escape.

"The attorney-general cannot give any of these letters, because the registers and papers of M. Ranson, his predecessor, were removed by his family, who have refused to return them to the archives of the court.

"ROSIE."

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These facts and documents militated strongly in my favour. M. Henry submitted my proposal to the prefect of the police, M. Pasquier, who decided on granting it. After a residence of two months at Bicêtre, I was removed to the Force; and, to avoid suspicion, it was stated amongst the prisoners, that I was kept back in consequence of being implicated in a very bad affair, which was to be inquired into. This precaution, joined to my renown, put me entirely in good odour. Not a prisoner dared breathe a doubt of the gravity of the charge against me. Since I had shown so much boldness and perseverance to escape from a sentence of eight years in irons, I must of necessity have a conscience charged with some great crime, capable, if I should be discovered as the author, of sending me to the scaffold. It was then whispered, and at last stated openly at La Force, in speaking of me, " He is a cut-throat!" And as, in the place where I was confined, an assassin inspires great confidence, I took care not to refute an error so useful to my plans. I was then far from seeing that an imposture, which I allowed freely to be charged upon me, would be thence perpetuated; and that one day, in publishing my Memoirs, it would be necessary to state that I had never committed murder. Since I have been a subject of conversation with the public, how many absurd tales have not been disseminated about me! What lies have not been invented to defame me, by agents interested in representing me as a vile wretch! Sometimes the tale runs, that I had been branded and condemned to perpetual labour at the galleys. Sometimes I was only freed from the guillotine, on condition of giving up to the police a certain number of persons every month; and if one was wanting, the bargain was to be declared void: and that was the reason, they affirm, that for want of real delinquents, I selected them at my pleasure. Did they not go so far as to accuse me of having, at the Café Lamblin, put a silver fork in the pocket of

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a student? I shall have occasion, at a later period, to revert to some of these calumnies, in several chapters in the following volumes; in which I shall develope the system of police, its means, and mysteries: in fact, all that has been revealed to me,—all that I have known.

The engagement I had entered into was not so easily fulfilled as may be supposed. In fact, I had known a crowd of malefactors; but, incessantly decimated by excesses of all sorts,—by justice, by the horrible discipline of bagnes and prisons, by misery,—this hideous generation had passed away with incredible rapidity: a new race occupied the stage, and I was even ignorant of the names of the actors who composed it; I was not even informed of their exploits. A multitude of robbers were then preying on the capital, and it was impossible to furnish the slightest indication of the principal of them; it was only on my ancient renown that I could rely for obtaining any information of the staff of these Bedouins of our civilization: it availed me, I will not say beyond, but equal to what I could desire. Not a robber arrived at La Force, who did not hasten to seek my company, if he had never seen me, to give himself consequence in the eyes of his comrades; it fed his self-love to appear to be on terms of intimacy with me. I encouraged this singular vanity, and thus insensibly made many discoveries; informations came to me in abundance, and I no longer experienced obstacles in acquitting myself of my undertaking.

To give an idea of the influence I had with the prisoners, it is enough to say, that I inoculated them at will with my opinions, my feelings, my sentiments; they thought by, they swore by me. If they happened to take a prejudice against one of the prisoners, because they thought he was what they called "a sneak," I had only to answer for him, and he was at once re-established. I was at once a powerful protector and a pledge of freedom, when it was suspected. The first for whom I gave a guarantee, was a young man

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accused of having served the police as a secret agent. They said, that he had been in the pay of the inspector-general, Veyrat; and they added, going to his house with an information, he had carried off a basket of plate.—To rob the inspector's house was not the crime, but to lay an information! Such, however, was the enormous crime imputed to Coco Lacour, now my successor. Threatened by the whole prison, driven about, repulsed, ill-treated, not daring to set a foot in the courts, where he would certainly have been knocked on the head, Coco came to solicit my protection; and to influence me the more in his favour, he began by making disclosures to me, which I knew how to turn to advantage. At first, I employed my credit in making his peace with the prisoners, who gave up their projects of vengeance. I could not have rendered him a more important service; and Coco, as much from gratitude as a desire of speaking, had soon no secret from me. One day, he had been before the judge of instruction: "Faith," said he, on his return, "I am lucky; none of the plaintiffs recognised me; yet I do not consider myself as safe: there is amongst them a devil of a porter, from whom I stole a silver watch. As I was obliged to talk with him for some time, my features must have been fixed on his memory; and, if he be called, he might do me a mischief, by confronting me; and besides, porters are, from their station, physiognomists." The observation was true; but I made Coco observe, that it was not likely that they would discover this man, and that most probably he would never come of his own accord, since he had not already done so; and, to confirm him in this opinion, I spoke to him of the carelessness or idleness of some people, who do not like to be disturbed. What I said about this, induced Coco to mention the quarter in which the owner of the watch lived, and even told me the number; and this was all I wanted.—I took care not to get so complete a detail as might induce a suspicion of me, and that given at the investigation

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appeared to me sufficient. I mentioned it to M. Henry, who thereupon sent out his spies. The result of the inquiry was as I had foreseen: they found out the porter; and Coco being confronted with him, was overwhelmed by the evidence, and sentenced by the tribunal to two years' imprisonment.

At this period there was in Paris a band of fugitive galley-slaves, who daily perpetrated robberies, without any hope being entertained of putting a termination to their plunderings. Many of them had been apprehended, and acquitted for want of evidence; obstinately entrenched in absence of witnesses, they had long braved the attempts of justice, which could neither oppose to them the testimony of the commission of crime, nor proofs of guilt. To surprise them properly, it would have been necessary to know their domicile; and they were so well concealed, that discovery seemed impossible. Amongst them was one named France, (called Tormel,) who, on coming to La Force, had nothing more urgent than to ask me for ten francs. to pay his footing, and I was not inclined to refuse his demand. He soon came to join me, and feeling obliged to me, did not hesitate to give me his confidence. At the time of his arrest he had concealed two notes of a thousand francs from the police, which he gave to me, begging me to advance him money, from time to time, as he needed it. "You do not know me," said he, "but these bills speak for me; I trust them to you, because I know they are better in your hands than in mine; some time or other we will change them, which now would be difficult, and we must wait." I agreed with France, as he wished; I promised to be his banker, as I risked nothing.

Apprehended for violent burglary at an umbrella shop in the passage Feydeau, France had been often interrogated, and constantly declared that he had no residence. However, the police had learnt that he had an abode; and it was the more interesting to learn it, as it would lead to the discovery of instruments of rob-

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bery, as well as a great quantity of stolen goods. It was a detection of the highest importance, since it would adduce most material proofs. M. Henry told me that he relied on me for obtaining this information; I manœuvred accordingly, and soon learnt that at the time of his arrest, France was at the corner of the Rue Montmartin and the Rue Notre Dame des Victoires, in an apartment let by a female receiver of stolen goods, named Josephine Bertrand.

These proofs were positive, but it was difficult to make use of the information without betraying my share in the business to France, who, having only confessed to me, could only suspect me of betraying him. I, however, succeeded; and so little did he suspect that I had abused his confidence, that he told me all his troubles, in proportion as the plan which I had concerted with M. Henry progressed. Besides, the police was so arranged, that they seemed only to be guided by cnance, and thus were the arrangements made.

They gained over to their interest one of the lodgers of the house which France had inhabited; and this lodger told the landlord, that, for about three weeks, no movement was seen in the apartment of Madame Bertrand; and this awakened and afforded a wide field for conjecture. It was remembered that a person went frequently in and out of this apartment; his absence was talked of, and it was a matter of astonishment that he was not seen: the word disappearance was mentioned, and thence the necessity of the intervention of the commissary; then the opening the door in presence of witnesses; then the discovery of a great quantity of stolen property belonging to the neighbourhood, and many of the instruments made use of to consummate these robberies. The next inquiry was, what had become of Josephine Bertrand? and all the persons were visited to whom she had referred when she hired the apartments, but nothing could be learnt of this woman; only that a girl, named Lambert, who had succeeded her in the apartment of the Rue Mont-

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martre, had just been apprehended; and as this girl was known as France's mistress, it was conjectured that these two had a common residence. France was in consequence conducted to the spot, and recognised by the neighbours. He pretended that he had been taken by surprise, and that they were mistaken, but the jury before whom he was taken decided otherwise, and he was condemned to the gallies for eight years.

France once convicted, it was easy to follow up the traces of his comrades, two of whom were named Fossard and Legagneur. They were watched, but the negligence and want of address in the officers enabled them to escape the pursuit which I directed. The former was a man the more dangerous, as he was very skilful in making false keys. For fifteen months he seemed to defy the police, when one day I learnt that he resided with a hair-dresser in the Rue du Temple, facing the common sewer. To apprehend him from home was almost impossible, for he was skilful in disguises, and could detect an officer a hundred paces off; on the other hand, it would be better to seize him in the midst of his professional apparatus, and the produce of his robberies. But the undertaking presented obstacles: Fossard never answered when they knocked at his door, and it was most likely that he had a means of egress, and facilities for getting over the roofs. It appeared to me, that the only mode of seizing him was, to profit by his absence and hide in his lodging. M. Henry was of my opinion; and the door being broken open in the presence of a commissary, three agents placed themselves in a closet adjoining a recess. Nearly seventy-two hours elapsed, and nobody arrived; at the end of the third day, the officers having exhausted their provisions, were going away, when they heard a key turn in the lock, and Fossard entered. Immediately two of the officers, in conformity with their instructions, darted from the closet and threw themselves upon him; but Fossard, arming himself with a knife which they had left on the table,

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frightened them so, that they themselves opened the door which their comrade had closed; and, having turned the key upon them, Fossard quickly descended the staircase, leaving the three agents all the leisure necessary for drawing up a report, in which nothing was wanting except the circumstance of the knife, which they were very cautious in mentioning. We shall see, in the progress of these Memoirs, how, in 1814, I contrived to arrest Fossard; and the particulars of this expedition are not the least interesting of these Memoirs.

Before being sent to the Conciergerie, France, who had never ceased to think me staunch, recommended one of his friends to me, named Legagneur, a fugitive galley-slave, arrested in the Rue de la Mortellerie, at the moment when he was executing a robbery by the aid of false keys; and this man, deprived of all resource in consequence of the departure of his comrade, was thinking of sending for the money which he had deposited with a receiver of stolen goods in the Rue St. Dominique, at the Gros-Caillou. Annette, who came constantly to see me at La Force, and sometimes ably abetted me in my pursuits, was charged with the commission; but either from distrust, or a desire to retain it for himself, the receiver received the messenger very ungraciously; and as she insisted, he threatened her with an arrest. Annette returned to tell us that she had failed in her errand. At this information Legagneur would have denounced the receiver, but that was only the first impulse of anger. Growing more calm, he judged it most fitting to defer his vengeance; and, moreover, to make it turn to his profit. "If I denounce him," said he to me, "not only shall I get nothing by it, but he may contrive to appear not at all in fault. It will be best to wait until I get out, and then I will make him squeak." Legagneur, having no further hope from his receiver, determined to write to two accomplices, Marguerit and Victor Desbois, renowned robbers. Convinced of this

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old truism, that small presents preserve friendship, in exchange for the aid he asked from them, he sent them the impressions of the locks which he had taken for his own private use. Legagneur again had recourse to the mediation of Annette, who found the two friends at the Rue Deux-Ponts, on a wretched ground floor, a place where they never met without taking great previous precaution. It was not their residence. Annette, whom I had desired to do all in her power to learn this, had the sense not to lose sight of them. She followed them for two days, under different disguises; and, on the third, informed me that they slept in the small Rue St. Jean, in a house with gardens behind. M. Henry, to whom I communicated this circumstance, arranged all the necessary measures which the nature of the place required; but his officers were not more courageous, nor more skilful, than those from whom Fossard had escaped. The two robbers saved themselves by the gardens, and it was not till some time afterwards that they were apprehended in the Rue St. Hyacinthe St. Michel.

Legagneur having been in his turn conducted to the Conciergerie, was replaced in my room by the son of a vintner at Versailles, named Robin, who, united with the thieves of the capital, told me, in our conversations, their arrangements, as well concerning all that had been done, as of their present state and intended plans. He it was who pointed out to me the prisoner Mardargent as a fugitive galley-slave, whilst he was only detained in custody as a deserter; for this latter crime he had been sentenced to twenty-four years' labour at the galleys: he had passed some time in the Bagne; and by the help of my notes and recollections, we were soon excellent friends: he fancied (and he was not mistaken) that I should be delighted to meet again my old companions in misfortune; he pointed out several amongst the prisoners, and I was fortunate enough to send back to the galleys a considerable number of those individuals whom justice, for want of the necessary

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proofs for their conviction, might have let loose upon society.

Never had any period been marked with more important discoveries than that which ushered in my début in the service of the police; although scarcely enrolled in this administration, I had already done much for the safety of the capital, and even for the whole of France. Were I to relate half my successes in my new department, my reader's patience would be exhausted; I will simply make mention of an adventure which occurred a few months before I quitted the prison, and which deserves to be rescued from the general oblivion.

One afternoon a tumult arose in the court, which terminated in a violent pugilistic combat; at this hour in the day such occurrences were very frequent, but in the present case there was as much ground for astonishment as if a duel had been fought between Orestes and Pylades. The two champions were Blignon and Charpentier, (called Chante à l'heure,) known to live in that disgusting intimacy which has no excuse, even the most rigorous seclusion. A violent quarrel had arisen between them; it was said that jealousy had sprung up to disunite them: however this may be, when the action had ceased, Chante à l'heure, covered with contusions, entered the drinking shop to have his bruises fomented. I was there engaged at my game of piquet. Chante à l'heure, irritated with his defeat, was no longer master of himself, and as the brandy he had called for to wash his hurts, found its way almost unconsciously to his mouth instead, he became proportionably energetic; until at last his mind could no longer contain the angry burst of his feelings. "My good friend," said he to me, (for you are my very good friend,) do you see how this beggar of a Blignon has served me? But he shall not go off scot free!"

"Oh, never heed him," I replied; "he is stronger than you, and you must mind what you are about. Do you wish to be half killed a second time?"

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"Oh, that is not what I mean. If I choose, I can put a stop to his beating me, or any one else again. I know what I know!"

"Well, and what do you know?" cried I, struck by the tone in which he pronounced these last words.

"Yes, yes," answered Chante à l'heure, highly exasperated; "he has done well in driving me to this: I have only to blab, and his business is settled."

"Nonsense; hold your tongue," said I, affecting not to believe him; "you are both birds of a feather. When you owe any one a spite, you have only to blow at his head, and he would instantly fall."

"You think so, do you?" said Chante à l'heure, striking the table. "Suppose I told you that he had slit a woman's weasand!"

"Not so loud, Chante à l'heure; not so loud," said I, putting my finger significantly on my lips. "You know very well that at Lorcefée (La Force) walls have ears; and you must not turn nose against a comrade."

"What do you call turning nose?" replied he, the more irritated in proportion as I feigned a wish to stop him from speaking; "when I tell you that it only depends on me to split upon him in another case."

"That is all very well," I replied; "but to bring a man before the big wigs, we must have proofs!"

"Proofs! Does the devil's child ever want them? Listen. You know the little shopkeeper who lives near the Pont Notre Dame?"

"An old procuress, mistress of Chatonnet, and wife of the hump-backed man?"

"The same! Well, three months ago, as Blignon and I were blowing a cloud quietly in a boozing ken of the Rue Planche-Mibray, she came there to us. 'There's *swag* for you my lads,' said she, 'not far off, in the Rue de la Sonnerie! You are boys of mettle, and I will put you on the lay. An old dowager who has been pocketing lots of blunt, a few days since received fifteen or twenty thousand francs, in notes or gold; she often comes home in the *durkey*, and you

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must slit her windpipe; and when you have prigged the chink, fling her into the river.' At first we did not relish the proposition, and would not hear of it, as we never cared to commit a murder; but the old hag so pestered us by telling us that she was well-feathered, and that there was no harm in doing for an old woman, that we agreed to it. It was settled that the procuress should give us notice of the precise time and hour. However, I felt very I don't-know-how-ish about it; because you see, when you are not used to a job of the kind, you feel queerish a bit. But never mind, all was settled; when next morning, at the Quatre-Cheminées, near Sevres, we met with Voivenel and another pal. Blignon told the business to them, at the same time stating his objection to the murder. They thereupon proposed to give us a hand if we chose. 'Agreed,' replied Blignon: 'where there is enough for two, there is enough for four:' thus we settled it, and they were to be in the *rig* with us. From that time Voivenel's pal never let us rest, and was impatient for the arrival of the moment. At length the old mother Murder-love told us all was ready. It was a thick fog on the night of the thirtieth of December. 'Now's the time!' said Blignon. Believe me or not, as you like; but on the word of a thief I would have backed out, but I could not; I was drawn on, and dogged the old woman with the others; and, in the evening, when, having, as we knew, received a considerable sum, she was returning from the house of M. Rousset, a person who let out carriages, in the Alley de la Pompe, we did for her. It was Voivenel's friend who stabbed her, whilst Blignon, having blinded her with his cloak, seized her from behind. I was the only one who did not dabble in her blood; but I saw all, for I was put on the look out: and I then learnt, and saw, and heard enough to give that scoundrel Blignon his passport to the guillotine."

Chante à l'heure then, with an insensibility which exceeds belief, detailed to me all the minutest circum-

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stances of this murder. I heard this abominable recital to the close, making incredible efforts to conceal my indignation; for every word which he uttered was of a nature to make the hair stand on end of even the least susceptible person. When the villain had finished retracing, with a horrible fidelity, the agonies of his victim, I urged him anew not to break off his friendship with Blignon: but at the same time I dexterously threw oil on the fire I appeared solicitous to extinguish. My plan was to lead Chante à l'heure to make a public confession of the horrible revelation to which rage and revenge had spurred him on. I was further desirous of being enabled to furnish justice with those means of conviction which would be necessary to punish the assassins. Much yet remained in uncertainty; possibly, after all, this affair was merely the fruits of an overheated brain, and Chante à l'heure, when no longer under the influence of wine and vengeance, might disavow all recollection of it. However the business might terminate, I lost no time in despatching to M. Henry a report, in which I explained the affair, as well as the doubts I myself entertained of its veracity; he was not long in replying to my communication, that the crime I alluded to was but too true. M. Henry begged I would endeavour to procure for him the precise account of everything which had preceded and followed this murder; and the very next day my plans were laid to obtain them. It was difficult to procure the arrest of any of the guilty party, without their suspecting the hand which directed the blow; but in this dilemma, as well as in many others in which I had been placed, chance came to my assistance. The following day I went to awaken Chante à l'heure, who still suffering from the intemperance of the preceding night, was unable to quit his bed; I seated myself beside him, and began to speak of the state of complete intoxication in which I had seen him, as well as of the indiscreet actions he had committed. The reproof appeared to astonish him; but when I repeated a few words of the

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conversation we had held together, his surprise redoubled, and as I had foreseen, he protested the impossibility of his having used such language; and whether he had effectually lost his recollection, or whether he mistrusted me, he tried hard to persuade me that he had not the slightest remembrance of what had passed. Whether he at this moment spoke the truth, or not, I profited by it to tell him that he had not confined his confidential communications to one alone, but had spoken of all the circumstances of the murder in a loud tone, in the presence of several prisoners who were sitting near the fire, and had heard all that had passed as well as myself. "What an unlucky fellow I am!" cried he, with every sign of sincere distress. "What have I done? What is to be done to extricate myself from the situation in which it places me?"—"Nothing is more simple," said I; "if you should be questioned as to the scene of yesterday, you can say, 'Upon my word, when I have taken too much drink, I say or do anything; and if I happen to have a spite against a man, I do not know what I might invent about him.'" Chante à l'heure took all this for genuine advice; but on the same morning, a man named Pinson, who passed for a great sneak, was conducted from La Force to the office of the prefect; this exchange could not have occurred more opportunely for my project, and I hastened to acquaint Chante à l'heure with it, adding that all the prisoners believed that Pinson was only removed in the expectation of his making some very important discoveries.

At this intelligence he appeared thunderstruck: "Was he one of those who were present when I was talking the other night?" asked he with strong anxiety. I replied that I had not particularly observed; he then communicated to me more frankly his fears, and I obtained from him fresh particulars, which, sent off without delay to M. Henry, caused all the accomplices in this murder to fall into the hands of justice; the shopkeeper and her husband were of the number. They

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were all committed to solitary confinement; Blignon and Chante à l'heure in the new building, the others in the infirmary, where they remained a very long time. The public authorities had inquired into it, and I no longer troubled myself with the affair. Nothing material resulted from the investigation, which had been badly begun from the first, and finally the accused were pardoned. My abode at Bicêtre and La Force embraced a point of twenty-one months, during which not a single day passed without my rendering some important service. I believe I might have become a perpetual spy, so far was every one from supposing that any connivance existed between the agents of the public authority and myself. Even the porters and keepers were in ignorance of the mission with which I was intrusted. Adored by the thieves, esteemed by the most determined bandits, (for even these hardened wretches have a sentiment which they call esteem,) I could always rely on their devotion to me; they would have been torn to pieces in my service, a proof of which occurred at Bicêtre, where Mardargent, of whom I have before spoken, had several severe battles with some of the prisoners who had dared to assert that I had only quitted La Force to serve the police. Coco-Lacour and Goreau, prisoners in the same gaol as incorrigible thieves, with no less ardour and generous intrepidity undertook my defence. Perhaps at that time they might have taxed me with ingratitude, that I did not evince to them any greater partiality than I showed to others; but my duty was imperious. Let them now receive the tribute of my gratitude; they have had a more powerful influence than they imagine in the advantages which society has derived from my services.

M. Henry did not allow the préfet to remain in ignorance of the numerous discoveries effected by my sagacity. This functionary, to whom I was represented as a person on whom he might depend, consented at last to put an end to my detention. Every measure was taken that it might not be known that I had recovered

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my liberty; they sent to fetch me from La Force, and carried me from thence without neglecting any of their rigorous precautions. My handcuffs were replaced, and I ascended the wicker car with the private understanding that I was to escape on the road, and I was not slow in profiting by this permission. The same night my flight was made known, and all the police were in search of me. This escape caused much noise, particularly at La Force, where my friends celebrated it with rejoicings, drank to my health, and wished me a safe and prosperous journey.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

M. Henry, surnamed the Evil Spirit—MM. Bertaux and Parisot—A word respecting the police—My first capture—Bouhin and Terrier are arrested upon my information.

The names of baron Pasquier and M. Henry will never be effaced from my recollection; these two generous men were my liberators; how many thanks do I not owe them! They restored me more than my life; for them I would cheerfully sacrifice it; and the reader will believe me, when he learns that I have frequently exposed it to obtain from them a single word, or a glance of satisfaction. I breathed once more the air of liberty; my blood flowed freely through my veins; I no longer feared anything. As the secret agent of government, I had duties marked out, and the kind and respectable M. Henry took upon himself to instruct me in their fulfilment; for in his hands were intrusted nearly the entire safety of the capital: to prevent crimes, discover malefactors, and to give them up to justice, were the principal functions confided to me. The task was difficult to perform. M. Henry kindly guided my first steps; he smoothed the difficulties of it for me; and if in the end I acquired some celebrity in the police, I owe it to his counsels, as well as to the excellent lessons I received from him. Gifted with a cool and reflective character, M. Henry possessed, in its utmost perfection, that tact of observation which can detect culpability under the greatest appearance of innocence: he had an astonishing memory; an acute penetration, from which nothing escaped; added to which he was an excellent judge of countenances. By thieves he was styled the Evil Spirit; and well did he merit the surname, for with him, cunning and suavity of manners were so

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conjoined as seldom to fail in their purpose. Rarely indeed did a criminal, interrogated by him, quit his closet without having confessed his crime, or given, unknown to himself, some clue by which to convict him. With M. Henry it was a sort of instinct which conducted him to the discovery of truth, it was not an acquired possession; and whosoever might have sought to assume his manner, to obtain the same results, would find himself continually perplexed and uncertain; for, chameleon-like, he changed with every circumstance, and varied with each character with whom he had to deal. Devoted to the duties of his post, he, in a manner, lived but for it, and was at all times accessible to the public business. It was not necessary under his management to wait till the hour of twelve before his offices were open to receive complaints, or, according to the present practice, to wait for hours in an antechamber ere an audience could be obtained. Industrious and persevering, no species of fatigue disheartened him; and to this undeviating course of life may be attributed the many infirmities with which he was afflicted, when, at the close of thirty-five years hard service, he retired from office. I have frequently seen him passing two or three nights in the week, and the greater part of his time, meditating upon the instructions he was about to give me, or to effect the prompt repression of crimes of every species. Illnesses (and he had many very severe ones) were scarcely permitted to interrupt his labours; it was only when carried into his study that he would listen to the directions of his physicians. In a word, he was a man, such as there are but very few, if indeed there exist any like him; his very name was a terror to offenders, and when brought before him, audacious as they were, they trembled and became confused; they blundered in their answers, believing that equivocation or denial was useless with one whom they firmly imagined had the power of reading their most inward thoughts.

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One remark which I have often had occasion to make is, that efficient men are always the best seconded; perhaps in verification of the old proverb, that "birds of a feather flock together." I leave the decision of the point to wiser heads than mine; but this I know, that M. Henry had coadjutors worthy of him; amongst the number was M. Bertaux, a cross-examiner of great merit, whose particular talent consisted in sifting a thing to the bottom, however intricate it might appear. The proofs of his talent may be found in the archives of the court. Next to him, I have great pleasure in naming M. Parisot, governor of the prisons. In a word, MM. Henry, Bertaux, and Parisot, formed a veritable triumvirate, which was incessantly conspiring against the perpetrators of all manner of crimes; to extirpate rogues from Paris, and to procure for the inhabitants of this immense city a perfect security: such was their mutual aim, their only thought, and the effects amply repaid them for the attempt. It is true, that there existed at this time among the heads of the police, a frankness, an unanimity, and a cordiality, which have disappeared in the last five or six years. In the present day, chiefs or subalterns mistrust each other; they reciprocally fear and hate each other; a continual state of hostilities is kept up; each dreads in his comrade a foe who will denounce him; there is no longer a sympathy of action in the different departments of the administration: and from whence does this proceed? Because each man's post and duties are not sufficiently definite. Nothing is distinctly defined; and no person, even of those highest in office, is placed in the department for which he is best fitted. Most usually, the préfet himself, on being elected to fill that important situation, is wholly ignorant of the duties of the police, and yet he ascends at once to the highest rank in it, there to pass through his apprenticeship. In his train follow a crowd of protegés, whose least fault is that of being destitute of decided talent, but

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who, for want of being equal to other employment, occupy themselves with flattering their patrons, and preventing the truth from reaching their ears. Thus have I seen, from time to time, sometimes under one direction and sometimes under another, the police organized, or rather indeed disorganized, each change of a préfet introducing into it fresh novices, and causing the dismissal of experienced officers. I shall hereafter dwell more at length upon the consequences of these changes, which have originated solely in the desire of bestowing appointments upon the creatures of the last comer. Meanwhile I will resume the thread of my narrative.

So soon as I was installed in my new office of secret agent, I commenced my rounds, in order to take my measures well for setting effectually to work. These journies, which occupied me nearly twenty days, furnished me with many useful and important observations, but as yet I was only preparing to act, and studying my ground.

One morning I was hastily summoned to attend the chief of the division. The matter in hand was to discover a man named Watrin, accused of having fabricated and put in circulation false money and bank notes. The inspectors of the police had already arrested Watrin, but, according to custom, had allowed him to escape. M. Henry gave me every direction which he deemed likely to assist me in the search after him; but unfortunately he had only gleaned a few simple particulars of his usual habits and customary haunts; every place he was known to frequent were freely pointed out to me; but it was not very likely he would be found in those resorts which prudence would call upon him carefully to avoid; there remained therefore only a chance of reaching him by some by-path. When I learnt that he had left his effects in a furnished house, where he once lodged, on the boulevard of Mont Parnasse, I took it for granted that, sooner or later, he would go there in search of

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his property; or at least that he would send some person to fetch it from thence; consequently, I directed all my vigilance to this spot; and after having reconnoitred the house, I lay in ambush in its vicinity night and day, in order to keep a watchful eye upon all comers and goers. This went on for nearly a week, when, weary of not observing anything, I determined upon engaging the master of the house in my interest, and to hire an apartment of him, where I accordingly established myself with Annette, certain that my presence could give rise to no suspicion. I had occupied this post for about fifteen days, when one evening, at eleven o'clock, I was informed that Watrin had just come, accompanied by another person. Owing to a slight indisposition, I had retired to bed earlier than usual; however, at this news I rose hastily, and descended the staircase by four stairs at a time; but whatever diligence I might use, I was only just in time to catch Watrin's companion; him I had no right to detain, but I made myself sure that I might, by intimidation, obtain further particulars from him. I therefore seized him, threatened him, and soon drew from him a confession, that he was a shoemaker, and that Watrin lived with him, No. 4, Rue des Mauvais Garçons. This was all I wanted to know: I had only had time to slip an old great coat over my shirt, and, without stopping to put on more garments, I hurried on to the place thus pointed out to me. I reached the house at the very instant that some person was quitting it: persuaded that it was Watrin, I attempted to seize him; he escaped from me, and I darted after him up a staircase; but at the moment of grasping him, a violent blow which struck my chest drove me down twenty stairs. I sprung forward again, and that so quickly, that to escape from my pursuit he was compelled to return into the house through a sash window. I then knocked loudly at the door, summoning him to open it without delay. This he refused to do. I then desired Annette (who

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had followed me) to go in search of the guard, and whilst she was preparing to obey me, I counterfeited the noise of a man descending the stairs. Watrin, deceived by this feint, was anxious to satisfy himself whether I had actually gone, and softly put his head out of window to observe if all was safe. This was exactly what I wanted. I made a vigorous dart forwards, and seized him by the hair of his head: he grasped me in the same manner, and a desperate struggle took place: jammed against the partition wall which separated us, he opposed me with a determined resistance. Nevertheless, I felt that he was growing weaker; I collected all my strength for a last effort; I strained every nerve, and drew him nearly out of the window through which we were struggling: one more trial and the victory was mine; but in the earnestness of my grasp we both rolled on the passage floor, on to which I had pulled him: to rise, snatch from his hands the shoemaker's cutting-knife with which he had armed himself, to bind him, and lead him out of the house, was the work of an instant. Accompanied only by Annette, I conducted him to the prefecture, where I received the congratulations first of M. Henry, and afterwards those of the prefect of police, who bestowed on me a pecuniary recompense. Watrin was a man of unusual address; he followed a coarse clumsy business, and yet he had given himself up to making counterfeit money, which required extreme delicacy of hand. Condemned to death, he obtained a reprieve the very hour that was destined for his execution; the scaffold was prepared; he was taken down from it, and the amateurs of such scenes experienced a disappointment. All Paris remembers it. A report was in circulation that he was about to make some very important discoveries; but as he had nothing to reveal, a few days afterwards he underwent his sentence.

Watrin was my first capture, and an important one too; this successful beginning awoke the jealousy of

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the peace-officers, as well as those under my orders; all were exasperated against me, but in vain; they could not forgive me for being more successful than themselves. The superiors, on the contrary, were highly pleased with my conduct; and I redoubled my zeal to render myself still more worthy their confidence.

About this period a vast number of counterfeit five-franc pieces had got into general circulation; several of them were shown to me; whilst examining them, I fancied I could discover the workmanship of Bouhin (who had informed against me) and of his friend, Dr. Terrier. I resolved to satisfy my mind as to the truth of this; and in consequence of this determination, I set about watching the steps of these two individuals; but as I durst not follow them too closely, lest they might recognise me, and mistrust my observation, it was difficult for me to obtain the intelligence I wanted. Nevertheless, by dint of unwearied perseverance, I arrived at the certainty of my not having mistaken the matter, and the two coiners were arrested in the very act of fabricating their base coin; they were shortly after condemned and executed for it. It has been publicly asserted, in consequence of a report set on foot by the inspectors of the police, that Dr. Terrier had been led away by me, and that I had in a manner placed in his hands the instruments of his crime.

Let the reader remember the reply which this man made to me, when, at Bouhin's house, I sought to persuade him to renounce his guilty industry, and he will judge whether Terrier was a man to allow himself to be drawn away.

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CHAPTER XXV.

I again meet St. Germain—He proposes to me the murder of two old men—The plunderers—The grandson of Cartouche—A short account of instigating agents—Great perplexities—Annette again aids me—An attempt to rob the house of a banker in the Rue Hauteville—I am killed—Arrest of St. Germain and his accomplice Boudin—Portraits of these two assassins.

In so populous a capital as that of Paris, there are usually a vast many places of bad resort, at which assemble persons of broken fortune and ruined fame; in order to judge of them under my own eye, I frequented every house and street of ill fame, sometimes under one disguise and sometimes under another, assuming indeed all those rapid changes of dress and manner which indicated a person desirous of concealing himself from the observation of the police, till the rogues and thieves whom I daily met there firmly believed me to be one of themselves; persuaded of my being a runaway, they would have been cut to pieces before I should have been taken; for not only had I acquired their fullest confidence, but their strongest regard; and so much did they respect my situation, as a fugitive galley-slave, that they would not even propose to me to join in any of their daring schemes, lest it might compromise my safety. All however did not exercise this delicacy, as will be seen hereafter. Some months had passed since I commenced my secret investigations, when chance threw in my way St. Germain, whose visits had so often filled me with consternation. He had with him a person named Boudin, whom I had formerly seen as a restaurateur in Paris, in the Rue des Prouvaires, and of whom I knew no more than that trifling acquaintance which arose from my occasionally exchanging my money for his dinners. He however seemed easily to recollect me, and, ad-

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dressing me with a bold familiarity, which my determined coolness seemed unable to subdue, "Pray," said he, "have I been guilty of any offence towards you, that you seem so resolved upon cutting me?"—"By no means, sir," replied I; "but I have been informed that you have been in the service of the police."—"Oh, oh, is that all?" cried he, "never mind that, my boy; suppose I have, what then? I had my reasons; and when I tell you what they were, I am quite sure you will not bear me any ill will for it."—"Come, come," said St. Germain, "I must have you good friends; Boudin is an excellent fellow, and I will answer for his honour, as I would do for my own. Many a thing happens in life we should never have dreamt of, and if Boudin did accept the situation you mention, it was but to save his brother: besides, you must feel satisfied, that were his principles such as a gentleman ought not to possess, why, you would not find him in my company." I was much amused with this excellent reasoning, as well as with the pledge given for Boudin's good faith: however, I no longer sought to avoid the conversation of Boudin. It was natural enough that St. Germain should relate to me all that had happened to him since his last disappearance, which had given me such pleasure.

After complimenting me on my flight, he informed me that after my arrest he had recovered his employment, which he however was not fortunate enough to keep; he lost it a second time, and had since been compelled to trust to his wits to procure a subsistence. I requested he would tell me what had become of Blondy and Deluc? "What," said he, "the two who slit the waggoner's throat? Oh, why the guillotine settled their business at Beauvais." When I learnt that these two villains had at length reaped the just reward of their crimes, I experienced but one regret, and that was, that the heads of their worthless accomplices had not fallen on the same scaffold.

After we had sat together long enough to empty se-

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veral bottles of wine, we separated. At parting St Germain having observed that I was but meanly clad, inquired what I was doing, and as I carelessly answered that at present I had no occupation, he promised to do his best for me, and to push my interest the first opportunity that offered. I suggested that, as I very rarely ventured out for fear of being arrested, we might not possibly meet again for some time. "You can see me, whenever you choose," said he; "I shall expect that you will call on me frequently." Upon my promise to do so, he gave me his address, without once thinking of asking for mine.

St. Germain was no longer an object of such excessive terror as formerly in my eyes; I even thought it my interest to keep him in sight, for if I applied myself to scrutinizing the actions of suspicious persons, who better than he called for the most vigilant attention? In a word, I resolved upon purging society of such a monster. Meanwhile I waged a determined war with all the crowd of rogues who infested the capital. About this time robberies of every species were multiplying to a frightful extent: nothing was talked of but stolen palisades, out-houses broken open, roofs stripped of their lead; more than twenty reflecting lamps were successively stolen from the Rue Fontaine au Roi, without the plunderers being detected. For a whole month the inspectors had been lying in wait in order to surprise them, and the first night of their discontinuing their vigilance the same depredations took place. In this state, which appeared like setting the police at defiance, I accepted the task which none seemed able to accomplish, and in a very short time (to the great disappointment of all the Arguses of the Quai du Nord) I was enabled to bring the whole band of these shameless plunderers to public justice, which immediately consigned them to the galleys. One amongst them was named Cartouche. I do not know whether the name he bore had any particular influence over him, or whether he possessed any quality peculiar to

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his family; probably he might be a descendant of the celebrated Cartouche. I leave to genealogists the trouble of deciding the question.

Each day increased the number of my discoveries. Of the many who were committed to prison, there were none who did not owe their arrest to me, and yet not one of them for a moment suspected my share in the business. I managed so well, that neither within nor without its walls, had the slightest suspicion transpired. The thieves of my acquaintance looked upon me as their best friend and true comrade; the others esteemed themselves happy to have an opportunity of initiating me in their secrets, whether for the pleasure of conversing with me, or in the hope of benefiting by my counsels. It was principally beyond the barriers that I met with these unfortunate beings. One day that I was crossing the outer boulevards, I was accosted by St. Germain, who was still accompanied by Boudin. They invited me to dinner; I accepted the proposition, and over a bottle of wine they did me the honour to propose that I should make a third in an intended murder.

The matter in hand was to despatch two old men, who lived together in the house which Boudin had formerly occupied in the Rue des Prouvaires. Shuddering at the confidence placed in me by these villains, I yet blessed the invisible hand which had led them to seek my aid. At first I affected some scruples at entering into the plot, but at last feigned to yield to their lively and pressing solicitations, and it was agreed that we should wait the favourite moment for putting into execution this most execrable project. This resolution taken, I bade farewell to St. Germain and his companion, and (decided upon preventing the meditated crime) hastened to carry a report of the affair to M. Henry, who sent me without loss of time to obtain more ample details of the discovery I had just made to him. His intention was to satisfy himself whether I had been really solicited to take part in it,

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or whether, from a mistaken devotion to the cause of justice, I had endeavoured to instigate those unhappy men to an act which would render them amenable to it. I protested that I had adopted no such expedient, and as he discovered marks of truth in my manner and declaration, he expressed himself satisfied. He did not, however, omit to impress on me the following discourse upon instigating agents, which penetrated my very heart. Ah, why was it not likewise heard by those wretches, who since the revolution have made so many victims! The renewed era of legitimacy would not then in some circumstances have recalled the bloody days of another epoch. "Remember well," said M. Henry to me, in conclusion, "remember that the greatest scourge of society is he who urges another on to the commission of evil. Where there are no instigators to bad practices, they are committed only by the really hardened; because they alone are capable of conceiving and executing them. Weak beings may be drawn away and excited: to precipitate them into the abyss, it frequently requires no more than to call to your aid their passions or self-love; but he who avails himself of their weakness to procure their destruction, is more than a monster—he is the guilty one, and it is on his head that the sword of justice should fall. As to those engaged in the police, they had better remain for ever idle, than create matter for employment."

Although this lesson was not required in my case, yet I thanked M. Henry for it, who enjoined me not to lose sight of the two assassins, and to use every means in my power to prevent their arriving at the completion of their diabolical plan. "The police," said he, "is instituted as much to correct and punish malefactors, as to prevent their committing crimes; but on every occasion I would wish it to be understood, that we hold ourselves under greater obligations to that person who prevents one crime, than to him who procures the punishment of many." Conformably with

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these instructions, I did not allow a single day to pass without seeing St. Germain and his friend Boudin. As the blow they meditated was to procure them a considerable quantity of gold, I concluded that I might, without overacting my part, affect a degree of impatience about it. "Well," said I to them, every time we met, "and when is this famous affair to take place?"—"When!" replied St. Germain, "the fruit is not yet ripe; when the right time comes," added he, pointing to Boudin, "my friend there will let you know." Already had several meetings taken place, and yet nothing was decidedly arranged; once more I hazarded the usual question. "Ah! ah!" said St. Germain, "my good friend, now I can satisfy your natural curiosity; we have fixed upon to-morrow evening, and only waited for you to deliberate upon the best way of going to work." The meeting was fixed a little way out of Paris. I was punctual to the time and place, nor did St. Germain keep me waiting. "Hark ye," said he, "we have reflected upon this affair, and find that it cannot be put into execution for the present. We have, however, another to propose to you; and I warn you, you must say at once, without any equivocation, 'yes' or 'no.' Before we enter upon the object of my coming hither, it is but fair I should let you into a little confidential story respecting yourself, which was told to me by one Carré, who knew you at La Force. The tale runs, that you only escaped its walls upon condition of serving the police as its secret agent!"

At the words "secret agent," a feeling almost approaching to suffocation stole over me, but I quickly rallied upon perceiving that, however true the report might be, it had obtained but little faith with St. Germain, who was evidently waiting for my explanation or denial of it, without once suspecting its reality. My ever ready genius quickly flew to my aid, and without hesitation I replied, "that I was not much surprised

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at the charge, and for the simple reason that I myself had been the first to set the rumour afloat." St. Germain stared with wonder. "My good fellow," said I, "you are well aware that I managed to escape from the police whilst they were transferring me from La Force to Bicêtre. Well! I went to Paris and stayed there till I could go elsewhere. One must live, you know, how and where one can. Unfortunately, I am still compelled to play at hide and seek, and it is only by assuming a variety of disguises that I dare venture abroad, to look about and just see what my old friends are doing; but in spite of all my precautions, I live in constant dread of many individuals, whose keen eye quickly penetrated my assumption of other names and habits than my own; and who, having formerly been upon terms of familiarity with me, pestered me with questions I had no other means of shaking off, than by insinuating that I was in the pay of the police; and thus I obtained the double advantage of evading in my character of 'spy,' both their suspicions and ill will, should they feel disposed to exercise it in the procuring my arrest."

"Enough—enough," interrupted St. Germain; "I believe you; and, to convince you of the unbroken confidence I place in you, I will let you into the secret of our plans for to-night.—At the corner of the Rue d'Enghien, where it joins the Rue Hauteville, lives a banker, whose house looks out upon a very extensive garden; a circumstance greatly in favour both of our expedition and our escape after its completion. This same banker is now absent, and the cash-box, in which is a considerable sum in specie, besides bank notes, &c. is only guarded by two persons.—Well, you can guess the rest. We mean to make it our own, by the law of possession, this very evening. Three of us are bound by oath to do the job, which will turn out so profitably. But we want another; and now that you have cleared your character and given scandal the lie, you shall

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make the fourth. Come, no refusal!—we reckon on your company and assistance, and if you refuse, you are a regular set-down sneak."

I was as eager in accepting the invitation as St. Germain could possibly be in giving it; both Boudin and himself seemed much pleased with my zeal. Who my remaining coadjutor was I knew not, but my surmises on the subject were soon settled by the arrival of a man, a perfect stranger to myself, named Debenne. He was the driver of a cabriolet, the father of a large family, and a man, who, more from weak than bad principles, had allowed himself to be seduced by the temptations of his guilty companions. Whilst a mixed conversation was going on between them, my thoughts were busily at work upon the best method of causing them to be taken in the very act they were then discussing. What was my consternation to hear St. Germain, at the moment we all rose to pay our score, address us in these words:—

"My friends, when a man runs his neck into the compass of a halter, it behoves him to keep a sharp look out. We have this day decided upon playing a dangerous, but, as I take it, a sure game; and in order that the chance may be in our favour, I have determined upon the following measure, which I think you will all approve. About midnight, all four of us will obtain access into the house in question. Boudin and myself will undertake to manage the inside work, whilst you two remain in the garden, ready to second us in case of surprise. This undertaking, if successful, will furnish us with the means of living at our ease for some time; but it concerns our mutual safety, that we should not quit each other till the hour for putting our plan into execution."

This finale, which I feigned not to hear, was repeated a second time, and filled me with a thousand fears that I might not be able to withdraw myself from the affair, as I had intended. What was to be done? St. Germain was a man of uncommon daring, eager for

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money, and always ready to purchase it either with his own blood or that of others; however, as yet it was but ten o'clock in the morning; I hoped that, during the long interval between that hour and midnight, some opportunity would present itself of dexterously stealing away and giving information to the police. Meanwhile, I made not the slightest objection to the proposition of St. Germain, which was indeed the best pledge we could separately have of the good faith of the others. When he perceived that we were all agreed, St. Germain, who, by his energy, his talents for plotting and carrying his schemes into execution, was the real head of the conspiracy, expressed his satisfaction, and added further—"This unanimity is what I like; and I beg to say, that, for myself, I will leave nothing undone to merit the continuance of so flattering a consent to my wishes and opinions."

It was agreed that we should take a hackney coach, and proceed together to his house, situated in the Rue St. Antoine. Arrived there, we ascended into his chamber, where he was to keep us under lock and key until the instant of departure. Confined between four walls, in close converse with these robbers, I knew not what saint to invoke, and what pretext to invent, to effect my escape. St. Germain would have blown out my brains at the least suspicion; and how to act, or what was to be done, I knew not. My only plan was to resign myself to the event, be it what it might; and this determination taken, I affected to busy myself with the preparatives for our crime, the very sight of which redoubled my perplexity and horror. Pistols were laid on the table, in order to have the charges drawn and to be properly reloaded. Whilst they underwent a strict scrutiny, St. Germain remarked a pair which seemed to him no longer able "to do the state any service;" he laid them aside—"Here," said he, "these 'toothless barkers' will never do; whilst the rest of you are loading and priming your batteries, I will get these changed for others more likely to aid

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our purpose. As he was preparing to quit the room, I bade him remember that, according to our contract, none of us could quit the place without being accompanied by a second. "Right—quite right," replied he; "I like people not only to make, but to keep engagements; so come with me."—"But," said I, "these other two gentlemen?"—"Oh!" laughed St. Germain, "they shall be kept out of harm's way till our return;" so saying, he very coolly double-locked the door upon them, and then taking me by the arm, led me to a shop from which he generally supplied himself with what he required for his various expeditions. Upon the present occasion he purchased some balls, powder, flints, exchanged the old pistols for new ones, and, then declaring his business completed, returned with me to his house. On entering I felt a fresh thrill of horror, from perceiving how earnestly and yet calmly the wretch Boudin was occupied in sharpening two large dinner-knives on a hone;—the sight froze my blood, and I turned away in disgust.

Meanwhile the time was passing away; one o'clock struck, and no expedient of safety had yet presented itself. I yawned and stretched, feigning weariness, and going into an apartment adjoining the one in which we had assembled, threw myself on a bed, as if in search of repose; after a few instants, I appeared still more fidgetty with this indolence, and I could perceive that the others were not less so than myself. "Suppose we have a glass of something to cheer us," cried St. Germain. "An excellent idea!" I replied, almost leaping for joy at the unexpected opening it seemed likely to afford my scheme; "a most capital thought—and by way of helping it, if you can manage to send to my house, you may have a glass of Burgundy, such as cannot be met with every day." All declared the thought a most seasonable relief to the ennui which was beginning to have hold of them, now that all their work of preparation was at an end; and St. Germain without further delay despatched his porter to

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Annette, who was requested to bring the promised treat herself. It was agreed that nothing relative to our plan should be uttered before her; and whilst my three companions were indulging in rough jokes upon the unexpected pleasure thus offered them, I carelessly resumed my place on the bed, and whilst there traced with a pencil these few lines—"When you leave this place, disguise yourself; and do not for an instant lose sight of myself, St. Germain, or Boudin. Be careful to avoid all observation; and, above all, be sure to pick up any thing I may let fall, and to convey it as directed." Short as was this hurried instruction, it was, I knew, sufficient for Annette, who had frequently received similar directions, and I felt quite assured that she would comprehend it in its fullest sense. It was not long before she joined us, bringing with her the basket of wine. Her appearance was the signal for mirth and gaiety. She was complimented by all; and as for myself, under the semblance of thanking her for her ready attendance with an embrace, I managed to slip the billet into her hand: she understood me, took leave of the company, and left me far happier than I had felt an hour before.

We made a hearty dinner, after which I suggested the idea of going alone with St. Germain to reconnoitre the scene of action, in order to be provided with the means of guarding against any accident. As this seemed merely the counsel of a prudent man, it excited no suspicion; the only difference in his opinion and mine was, that I proposed taking a hackney-coach, whilst he judged it better to walk. When we reached the part he considered most favourable for scaling, he pointed it out to me; and I took care to observe it so well, that I could easily describe it to another, without fear of any mistake arising. This done, St. Germain recollected that we had all better cover our faces with black crape, and we proceeded towards the Palais Royal, for the purpose of buying some; and whilst he was in a shop, examining the different sorts, I managed

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to scrawl hastily on paper every particular and direction which might enable the police to interfere and prevent the crime. St. Germain, whose vigilance never relaxed, and who had as much as possible kept his eye upon me with calm scrutiny, conducted me to a public-house, where we refreshed ourselves with some beer: quitting this place, we walked again homewards, without my having been enabled to dispose of the billet I had written; when, just as we were re-entering his odious den of crimes, my eye caught sight of Annette, who, disguised in a manner that would have effectually deceived every other but myself, was on the watch for our return. Convinced that she had recognised me, I managed to drop my paper as I crossed the threshold, and relieved, in a great measure, of many of my former apprehensions, I committed myself to my fate. As the terrible hour for the fulfilment of our scheme approached, I became a prey to a thousand terrors. Spite of the warning I had sent through Annette, the police might be tardy in obeying its directions, and might perhaps arrive too late to prevent the consummation of the crime. Should I at once avow myself, and, in my real character, arrest St. Germain and his accomplices? Alas! what could I do against three powerful men, rendered furious by revenge and desperation? And besides, had I even succeeded in my attempt, who could say that I might be believed, when I denied all participation with them, except such as was to further the ends of justice. Instances rose to my recollection, where, under similar circumstances, the police had abandoned its agents, or, confounding them with the guilty wretches with whom they had mingled, refused to acknowledge their innocence. I was in all the agony of such reflections, when St. Germain roused me, by desiring I would accompany Debenne, whose cabriolet was destined to receive the expected treasure of money-bags, and was for that purpose to be stationed at the corner of the street. We went out together, and, as I looked around me, I

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again met the eye of my faithful Annette, whose glance satisfied me that all my commissions had been attended to. Just then, Debenne inquired of me the place of rendezvous. I know not what good genius suggested to me the idea of saving this unhappy creature. I had observed that he was not wicked at heart, and that he seemed rather drawn towards the abyss of guilt by want and bad advice, than by any natural inclination for crime. I hastily assigned to him a post, away from the spot which had been agreed on; and, happy in having saved him from the snare, rejoined St. Germain and Boudin at the angle of the boulevard St. Denis. It was now about half-past ten, and I gave them to understand that the cabriolet would require some time in getting ready; that I had given orders to Debenne, that he should take his station in the corner of the Rue du Faubourg Poissonnière, ready to hasten to us at the slightest signal. I observed to them, that the sight of a cabriolet too near to the place of our labours might awaken suspicion; and they agreed in thinking my precautions wisely taken.

Eleven o'clock struck—we took a glass together in the fauxbourg St. Denis, and then directed our steps towards the banker's habitation. The tranquillity of Boudin and his infamous associate, had something in it almost fiend-like: they walked coolly along, each with his pipe in his mouth, which was only removed to hum over some loose song.

At last we arrived at the part of the garden wall it had been determined to scale, by means of a large post, which would serve as a ladder. St. Germain demanded my pistols;—my heart began to beat violently, for I fully expected that, having by some ill chance penetrated my real share in the affair, he meant that I should answer for it with my life: resistance would have been useless, and I put them into his hands; but, to my extreme relief, he merely opened the pan, changed the priming, and returned them to me. After having performed a similar operation on his own pistols and

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those of Boudin, he set the example of climbing the post; Boudin followed; and both of them, without interrupting their smoking, sprung into the garden: it became my turn to follow them: trembling, I reached the top of the wall; all my former apprehensions crowded back upon me. Had the police yet had time to lay their ambuscade? Might not St. Germain have preceded them? These and a thousand similar questions agitated my mind. My feelings were, however, wrought up to so high a pitch, that, in the midst of such a moment of cruel suspense, I determined on one measure, namely, to prevent the commission of the crime, though I sunk in the unequal struggle. However, St. Germain, seeing me still sitting astride on the top of the wall, and becoming impatient at my delay, cried out, "Come, come, down with you." Scarcely had he said the words, than he was vigorously attacked by a number of men. Boudin and himself offered a desperate resistance. A brisk firing commenced—the balls whistled—and, after a combat of some minutes, the two assassins were seized, though not before several of the police had been wounded. St. Germain and his companion were likewise much hurt. For myself, as I took no part in the engagement, I was not likely to come to any harm: nevertheless, that I might sustain my part to the end, I fell on the field of battle, as though I had been mortally wounded. The next instant I was wrapped in a covering, and in this manner conveyed to a room where Boudin and St. Germain were; the latter appeared deeply touched at my death; he shed tears, and it was necessary to employ force to remove him from what he believed to be my corpse.

St. Germain was a man of about five feet eight inches high, with strongly developed muscles, an enormous head, and very small eyes, half closed, like those of an owl; his face, deeply marked with the small-pox, was extremely plain; and yet, from the quickness and vivacity of his expression, he was by many persons considered pleasing. In describing his features, a

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strong resemblance would suggest itself to those of the hyena and wolf, particularly if the attention were directed to his immensely wide jaws, furnished with large projecting fangs; his very organization partook of the animal instinct common to beasts of prey; he was passionately fond of hunting; the sight of blood exhilarated him: his other passions were gaming, women, and good eating and drinking. As he had acquired the air and manners of good society, he expressed himself when he chose with ease and fluency, and was almost always fashionably and elegantly dressed; he might be styled a "well-bred thief." When his interest required it, no person could better assume the pleasant mildness of an amiable man; at other times he was abrupt and brutal. His comrade Boudin was diminutive in stature, scarcely reaching five feet two inches; thin, with a livid complexion; his eyes dark and piercing, and deeply sunk in his head. The habit of wielding the carving-knife, and of cutting up meat, had rendered him ferocious. He was bow-legged; a deformity I have observed amongst several systematic assassins, as well as amongst many other individuals distinguished by their crimes.

I cannot remember any event of my life which afforded me more real satisfaction than the taking of these two villains. I applauded myself for having delivered society from two monsters, at the same time that I esteemed myself fortunate in having saved Debenne from the fate which would have befallen him, had he been taken with them. However, the share of self-satisfaction produced by the feeling of having been instrumental in rescuing a fellow-creature from destruction, was but a slight compensation for the misery I experienced at being in a manner compelled by the stern duties of the post I filled, either to send a fresh succession of victims to ascend the scaffold, or to mount it myself. The quality of "secret agent" preserved, it is true, my liberty, and shielded me from the dangers to which, as a fugitive galley-slave, I was

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formerly exposed; true, I was no longer subjected to the many terrors which had once agitated me: but still I was not pardoned; and until that happy event took place the liberty I enjoyed was but a precarious possession, which the caprice of my employers could deprive me of at any moment. Again, I was not insensible to the general odium attached to the department I filled. Still, revolting as were its functions to my own choice and mind, it was a necessary evil, and one from which there was no escape. I therefore strove to reconcile myself to it by arguments such as these:—Was I not daily occupied in endeavouring to promote the welfare of society? Was I not espousing the part of the good and upright against the bad and vicious? And should I by these steps draw down upon me the contempt of mankind? I went about dragging guilt from its hidden recesses, and unmasking its many schemes of blood and murder; and should I for this be pointed out with the finger of scorn and hatred? Attacking thieves, even on the very theatre of their crimes, wresting from them the weapons with which they had armed themselves, I boldly dared their vengeance; and did I for this merit to be despised? My reason became convinced; and my mind, satisfied with the upright motives which guided me, regained its calmness and self-command; and thus armed, I felt that I had courage to dare the ingratitude and obloquy of an unjust opinion respecting me and my occupation.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

I continue to frequent places of bad resort—The inspectors betray me—Discovery of a receiver of stolen goods—I arrest him—Stratagem employed to convict him—He is condemned.

The thieves, who had experienced a temporary panic at the many arrests which had successively fallen, with unexpected vengeance, on many of their party, were not long in reappearing more numerous and more audacious than ever. Amongst their number were several fugitive galley-slaves, who, having perfected in the Bagnes a very dangerous sort of trade and ready invention, had come to exercise it in Paris, where they soon rendered themselves dreaded by all parties. The police, exasperated at their boldness, resolved upon putting an end to their career. I was accordingly commanded to seek them out; and further orders were given to me, to arrange a plan of action with the peace-officers, by which they might be at hand whenever I deemed it likely, they could effect the capture of any of these ruffians. It may be easily guessed how difficult my task must be: however, I lost no time in visiting every place of ill fame, both in the metropolis and its environs. In a very few days I had gained the knowledge of all the dens of vice where I might be likely to meet with these wretches. The barrier de la Courtille, those of the Combat and de Menilmontant, were the places of most favourite resort; they were, in a manner, their head-quarters, and woe to the agent who had shown himself there, no matter for what reason; he would assuredly have had his brains beaten out. The gendarmes were equally in dread of this well-known and formidable association, and carefully abstained from approaching it. For my own part, I felt less timidity, and ventured without hesitation into the midst of this herd of miserable

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beings. I frequented their society; I became to outward semblance one of themselves; and soon gained the advantage of being treated with so much confidence as to be admitted to their nocturnal meetings, where they openly discussed the crimes they had committed, as well as those they meditated. I managed so skilfully, that I easily drew from them the particulars of their own abode, or that of the females with whom they cohabited. I may go still further, and assert, that so boundless was the confidence with which I inspired them, that had any one of their members dared to express the shadow of a suspicion respecting me, he would have been punished on the spot. In this manner I obtained every requisite information; so that, when I had once indicated any fit object for arrest, his conviction and condemnation became matters of course. My researches "intra muros," were not less successful. I frequented every tennis-court in the environs of the Palais-Royal, the Hotel d'Angleterre, the boulevards of the Temple; the streets of la Vannerie, of la Mortellerie, of la Planche Mibray; the market St. Jaques, Petite Chaise; the Rues de la Juiverie, la Calandre, le Châtelet; the Place Maubert, and in fact the whole city. Not a day passed in which I did not effect some important discovery. Nothing escaped me, either relating to crimes which had been committed, or were in contemplation. I was in all places; I knew all that was passing or projecting; and never were the police idly or unprofitably employed when set to work upon my suggestions.

M. Henry openly expressed his surprise as well as satisfaction at my zeal and success; it was not so with many of the peace-officers and sub-agents of police, for, little accustomed to the hard duty and constant watchfulness my plans induced, they openly murmured. Some of them, in their anxiety to be rid of the irksomeness of my direction, were cowardly enough to betray the secret of the disguise under favour of which I had so skilfully manœuvred. This imprudent act drew

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down upon them severe reprimands, without having the effect of making them more circumspect, or more devoted to the public good.

It will be readily understood, that associating as I constantly did with the vilest and most abandoned, I must, as a matter of course, be repeatedly invited to join in their acts of criminal violence; this I never refused at the moment of asking, but always formed some plea for failing to attend the rendezvous for such purposes. These men of crimes were generally so absorbed in their villainous machinations, that the most flimsy excuse passed current with them: I may even say, that frequently it did not require the trouble of an excuse to deceive them. Once arrested, they never troubled themselves to find out by what means it had been effected; and had they even been more awake, my measures were laid too ably for them to have arrived at the chance of suspecting me as the author of it: indeed, I have often been accosted by some of the gang to communicate the sorrowful tidings of the apprehension of one of their number, as well as to beg my advice and assistance in endeavouring to procure his release.

Nothing is more easy, when once on good terms with a thief, than to obtain a knowledge of the persons to whom he disposes of his stolen property. I was enabled to discover several; and the directions with which I furnished the police were so unequivocal, that they never failed to join their worthy companions in the Bagnes. Perhaps the recital of the means I adopted to rid Paris of one of these dangerous characters, may not be uninteresting to the reader.

For many years the police had had its eye upon him, but as yet had not been able to detect him in any positive act of delinquency. His house had undergone repeated searches without any effect resulting from the most diligent inquiry; nothing of the most trifling nature could be found to rise in evidence against him. Nevertheless, he was known to traffic with the thieves;

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and many of them who were far from suspecting my connection with the police, pointed him out to me as a staunch friend, and a man on whom they could depend. These assertions respecting him were not sufficient to effect his conviction; it would be requisite to seize him with the stolen articles in his possession. M. Henry had tried every scheme to accomplish this; but whether from stupidity on the part of the agents employed by him, or the superior address of the receiver of stolen property, all his plans had failed. He was desirous of trying whether I should be more successful. I willingly undertook the office, and arranged my plans in the following manner. Posted near the house of the suspected dealer in stolen property, I watched for his going out, and following him when he had gone a few steps down the street, addressed him by a different name to his own. He assured me I was mistaken; I protested to the contrary: he insisted upon it I was deceived, and I affected to be equally satisfied of his identity, declaring my perfect recognition of his person as that of a man who for some time had been sought after by the police throughout Paris and its environs. "You are grossly mistaken," repied he warmly. "My name is so and so, and I live in such a street." "Come, come, friend," said I, "excuses are useless. I know you too well to part with you so easily."—"This is too much," cried he; "but at the next police station I shall possibly be able to meet with those who can convince you that I know my own name better than you seem to do." This was exactly the point at which I wished to arrive. "Agreed," said I; and we bent our steps towards the neighbouring guard-house. We entered, and I requested he would show me his papers: he had none about him. I then insisted upon his being searched, and on his person were found three watches and twenty-five double Napoleons, which I caused to be laid aside till he should be examined before a magistrate. These things had been wrapped in a handkerchief, which I contrived to secure; and after having disguised myself

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as a messenger, I hastened to the house of this receiver of stolen goods, and demanded to speak with his wife. She, of course, had no idea of my business, or knowledge of my person; and seeing several persons besides herself present, I signified to her that my business being of a private nature, it was important that I should speak to her alone; and in token of my claims to her confidence, produced the handkerchief, and inquired whether she recognised it? Although still ignorant of the cause of my visit, her countenance became troubled, and her whole person was much agitated as she begged me to let her hear my business. "I am concerned," replied I, "to be the bearer of unpleasant news; but the fact is, your husband has just been arrested, everything found on his person has been seized, and from some words which he happened to overhear, he suspects he has been betrayed; he therefore wishes you to remove out of the house certain things you are aware would be dangerous to his safety if found on the premises; if you please I will lend you a helping hand, but I must forewarn you that you have not one moment to lose."

The information was of the first importance; the sight of the handkerchief, and the description of the objects it had served to envelope, removed from her mind every doubt as to the truth of the message I had brought her, and she easily fell into the snare I had laid to entrap her. She thanked me for the trouble I had taken, and begged I would go and engage three hackney coaches, and return to her with as little delay as possible. I left the house to execute my commission; but on the road I stopped to give one of my people instructions to keep the coaches in sight, and to seize them, with their contents, directly I should give the signal. The vehicles drew up to the door, and upon re-entering the house, I found things in a high state of preparation for removing. The floor was strewed with articles of every description; time-pieces, candelabra, Etruscan vases, cloths, cachemires, linen,

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muslins, &c. All these things had been taken from a closet, the entrance to which was cleverly concealed by a large press, so skilfully contrived that the most practised eye could not have discovered the deception. I assisted in the removal, and when it was completed, the press having been carefully replaced, the woman begged of me to accompany her, which I did, and no sooner was she in one of the coaches, ready to start, than I suddenly pulled up the window, and at this previously concerted signal, we were immediately surrounded by the police. The husband and wife were tried at the assizes, and, as may be easily conceived, were overwhelmed beneath the weight of an accusation, in support of which there existed a formidable mass of convicting testimony.

Some persons may perhaps blame the expedient to which I had recourse, in order to free Paris from a receiver of stolen property, who had been for a long time a positive nuisance to the capital. Whether it be approved of or not, I have at least the consciousness of having done my duty; besides, when we wish to overreach scoundrels who are at open war with society, every stratagem is allowable by which to effect their conviction, except endeavouring to provoke the commission of crime.

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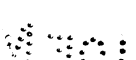
CHAPTER XXVII.

Gueuvive's gang—A girl helps me to discover the chief—I dine with the thieves—One of them takes me to sleep at his house—I pass for a fugitive galley-slave—I engage in a plot against myself—I wait for myself at my own door—A robbery in the Rue Cassette—Great surprise—Gueuvive with four of his men are arrested—The girl Cornevin points the others out to me—A batch of eighteen.

NEARLY about the same time in which the event mentioned in the last chapter occurred, a gang had formed itself in the Faubourg St. Germain, which was, more particularly, the scene of its exploits. It was composed of individuals who acted under the guidance of a captain named Gueuvive, alias Constantin, shortened by abbreviation into Antin; for the same custom exists amongst thieves as amongst bullies, spies, and informers, of being called only by the last syllable of the christian name. Gueuvive, or Antin, was a fencing-master, who after having served as bully to the lowest prostitutes, and for the humblest wages, was completing in his present character the many vicissitudes of his ill-spent life. It was well known that he was capable of any action, however bad, and although murder had never been proved against him, yet few doubted his willingness to shed blood, if by so doing he could reap the most trifling advantage. His mistress had been murdered in the Champs Elysees, and suspicions were strongly directed against him as the author of the crime. However this may be, Gueuvive was a man of enterprising character, extreme boldness, and possessed of the most unblushing effrontery; at least, this was the estimate formed of him by his companions, amongst whom he enjoyed a more than common celebrity.

For some time the attention of the police had been directed to this man and his associates, but without



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being enabled to secure any of them, although each day teemed with fresh accounts of their continued attacks upon the property of the citizens of Paris. At length it was seriously resolved to put an end to the misdeeds of these plunderers, and I received, in consequence, orders to go in search of them, and, to endeavour to take them in the very fact. This last point was particularly insisted upon, as being of the utmost importance. I accordingly provided myself with a suitable disguise, and that very evening opened the campaign in the Faubourg St. Germain, frequenting every place of ill fame in it. About midnight, I went to the house of a person named Boucher, in the Rue Neuve Guillemain, where I took a glass of brandy with some common girls; and whilst sitting with them, I heard the name of Constantin pronounced at the table adjoining mine. I at first imagined he was present; but upon cautiously questioning one of the girls, she assured me he was not; although, added she, "he seldom fails being here every day to meet his numerous friends." From the tone in which she spoke I fancied I could perceive that she was perfectly conversant with the habits of these gentry, and in the hope of drawing further particulars from her, I invited her to sup with me. The offer was accepted, and by the time I had well plied her with liquor, she gave me the information I required, and with the more readiness, as from my dress, actions, and expressions, she had set me down in her own mind as one of the light-fingered brethren. We passed a part of the night together, and I did not quit her till she had fully explained to me the different haunts of Gueuvive.

The next day, at twelve o'clock, I repaired to the house of Boucher, where I again met my companion of the preceding night. I had scarcely entered when she saw me, and immediately addressing me, cried, "Now is your time if you wish to speak with Gueuvive: he is here;" and she pointed to an individual of from twenty-eight to thirty years of age, neatly dressed,

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although but in his waistcoat; he was about five feet six inches high, extremely good looking, fine black hair and whiskers, regular teeth, in fact precisely as he had been described to me; without hesitation I addressed him, requesting he would oblige me with a little tobacco from his box. He examined me from head to foot, and inquired "if I had served in the army." I replied that I had been in an hussar regiment, and soon over a glass of good drink we fell into a deep conversation upon military affairs.

Time passed whilst we were thus engaged, and dinner was talked of; Gueuvive declared that I should make one in a party he had been arranging, and that my company would afford him much pleasure. It was not very probable I should refuse: I accepted his invitation without further ceremony; and we went away together to the Barrière du Maine, where four of his friends were awaiting his arrival. We immediately sat down to the dinner-table, and as I was a stranger to all, the conversation was very guarded. However, a few cant words which occasionally escaped them, soon served to convince me that all the members of this charming society were *cracksmen* (thieves).

They were all very curious to hear what I did for my living, and I soon fudged a tale which satisfied them, and induced them not only to suppose I came from the country, but likewise that I was a thief on the look-out for a job. I did not explicitly state these particulars, but affecting certain peculiarities which betray the profession, I allowed them to perceive that I had great reasons for wishing to conceal my person.

The wine was not spared, and so well did it loosen every tongue, that before the close of the repast, I had learned the abode of Gueuvive, as well as that of his worthy coadjutor, Joubert, and the names of many of their comrades. At the moment of our separating I hinted that I did not exactly know where I should procure a bed, and Joubert immediately offered to give

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me a night's lodging with him, and conducted me to the Rue St. Jaques, where he occupied a back room on the second-floor; there I shared with him the bed of his mistress, the girl Cornevin.

We conversed together for some time, and before we fell asleep, Joubert overwhelmed me with questions; his object was to sift out my present mode of existence, what papers I had about me, &c. His curiosity appeared insatiable, and in order to satisfy it, I contrived either by a positive falsehood, or an equivocation, to lead him to suppose me a brother thief. At last, as if he had guessed my meaning, he exclaimed, "Come, do not beat about the bush any longer; I see how it is, you know you are a prig." I feigned not to understand these words; he repeated them; and I, affecting to take offence, assured him that he was greatly mistaken, and that if he indulged in similar jokes, I should be compelled to withdraw from his company. Joubert was silenced, and nothing further was said till the next day at ten o'clock, when Gueuvive came to awaken us.

It was agreed that we should go and dine at La Glacière. On the road Gueuvive took me aside and said, "Hark'ye, I see you are a good fellow, and I am willing to do you a service if I can; do not be so reserved then, but tell me who and what you are." Some hint I had purposely thrown out having induced him to believe that I had escaped from the bagne at Toulon, he recommended me to observe a cautious prudence with my companions, "for though they are the best creatures living," said he, "yet they are rather fond of chattering."—"Oh," replied I, "I shall keep a sharp look out, I promise you; besides, Paris will never do for me, I must be off; there are too many sneaking informers about for me to be safe in it."—"That's true," added he, "but if you can keep Vidocq from guessing at your business, you are safe enough with me, who can smell those beggars as easily as a crow scents powder."—"Well," said I, "I can-

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not boast of so much penetration, yet I think, too, that from the frequent description I have heard of this Vidocq, his features are so well engraved in my recollection, that I should pretty soon recognise him, if I came unexpectedly in his way."—"God bless you!" cried he, "it is easy to perceive you are a stranger to the vagabond: just imagine now, that he is never to be seen twice in the same dress; that he is in the morning perhaps just such another looking person as you; well, the next hour so altered, that his own brother could not recognise him, and by the evening, I defy any man to remember ever having seen him before. Only yesterday, I met him disguised in a manner that would have deceived any eye but mine, but he must be a deep hand if he gets over me; I know these sneaks at the first glance, and if my friends were as knowing as myself, his business would have been done long ago."—"Nonsense," cried I; "everybody says the same thing of him, and yet you see there is no getting rid of him."—"You are right," replied he, "but to prove that I can act as well as talk, if you will lend me a helping hand, this very evening we will waylay him at his door, and I warrant we'll settle the job, so as to keep him from giving any of us further uneasiness."

I felt curious to learn whether he really was acquainted with my residence, and promised readily to join his scheme, and accordingly, about the dusk of the evening, we each tied up in handkerchiefs a number of heavy ten-sous pieces, in order to administer to this scamp of a Vidocq a few effectual blows the moment he should issue from his house. Having fastened the money in a hard knot at the corner of our handkerchiefs, we set out; and Constantin, who seemed just in the humour for the task he had undertaken, led the way to the Rue Neuve St. François, and stopped before a house, No. 14—my exact abode. I could not conceive how he had procured my address, and must confess the circumstance gave me great uneasi-

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ness, whilst it redoubled my wonder, that being so well acquainted with my dwelling, he should appear to nave so little knowledge of my person. We kept watch for several hours, but Vidocq, as may be well imagined, did not make his appearance; Constantin was highly enraged at this disappointment. "We must give it up for to-night," said he at length, "but the first time I meet the rascal, by heavens he shall pay doubly for keeping me waiting now."

At midnight we retired, putting off the execution of our project till the ensuing night. It was amusing enough to see me thus assisting in laying an ambuscade for myself to be caught in. The readiness with which I embarked in the scheme quite won the goodwill of Constantin, who from this moment treated me with the greatest confidence; he even invited me to make one in a projected plan for robbing a house in the Rue Cassette. I agreed to join the party, but declared that I neither could nor would venture out in the night, without first going home for the necessary papers which would serve me in case of our scheme failing, and our getting into the hands of the police. "In that case," replied he, "you may as well just keep watch for us, whilst we do the job." At length the robbery took place, and as the night was excessively dark, Constantin and his companions wishing to hurry faster than the absence of all light permitted them, had the boldness to take down a lamp from before a door, and to carry it before them. Upon their return home, this watchlight was placed in the middle of the room, whilst they seated themselves around it to examine and divide their booty; in the midst of their exultation at the rich results of their expedition, a sudden knocking was heard at the door: the robbers, surprised and alarmed, looked at each other in silent dread. This was a suprise for which they were indebted to me. Again the knocking was heard. Constantin then by a sign commanding silence, said in a whisper, "'Tis

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the police; I am sure of it." Amidst the confusion occasioned by these words, and the increased knocking at the gate, I contrived, unobserved, to crawl under a bed, where I had scarcely concealed myself when the door was burst open, and a swarm of inspectors and other officers of the police entered the room. A general search took place, even the bed where the mistress of Joubert slept did not escape: they struck their sticks both over and under the bed which served as my hiding-place without discovering me, but that, of course, I was prepared for.

The commissioner of the police drew up a procès-verbal, an inventory of the stolen property, and it was packed off with the five thieves to the prefecture. This operation completed, I quitted my hiding-place, and found myself alone with the girl Cornevin, who was all astonishment at my good fortune, the reason of which she was far from suspecting. She urged me to remain where I was. "What are you thinking of?" said I. "Suppose the police return! No, no; let me get away now the coast is clear, and I promise to join you at l'Estrapade." I sought my own house to procure the repose I so greatly needed, and at the hour agreed on went to fulfil my appointment with Cornevin, who was expecting me. It was on her I depended to procure a complete list of all the friends and associates of Joubert and Constantin; and as I stood rather high in her good graces, she soon furnished me with the desired information; so that in less than a fortnight, thanks to an auxiliary I contrived to introduce amongst the gang, I succeeded in causing them to be arrested in the very commission of their crimes. There were eighteen in all, who, with Constantin, were condemned to the gallies.

At the moment when the chain to which they belonged was about to set out, Constantin having perceived me, became perfectly furious, and broke out into the most violent imprecations and invectives; but,

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without feeling any offence at his gross and vulgar appellations, I contented myself with approaching him and saying coolly, "that it was very surprising how a man like him, who knew Vidocq, and could boast of the precious faculty of 'smelling out an informer as far off as a crow scents powder,' should have allowed himself to be done in that manner." This was a knock-down blow to Constantin; he could make no reply, but with an air of sullen confusion, turned away from me, and was silent.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

The agents of the police chosen from amongst liberated galley-slaves, thieves, bullies, and prostitutes—Theft tolerated—Degeneracy of the inspectors—Coalition of informers—They denounce me—Destruction of three classes of thieves—Formation of a new species—The brothers Delzève—How discovered—Delzève the younger arrested—The perquisites of a préfet of police—I free myself from the yoke of the peace-officers and inspectors—My life is in danger—A few anecdotes.

I WAS not the only secret agent of the police of safety: a Jew named Gaffré was my coadjutor; he had been employed before me by the police, but as our principles did not agree, we did not long go on with harmony together. I perceived that he was a bad fellow, and mentioned my opinion to the chief of the division, who, having ascertained the justice of my report, expelled him, and ordered him to quit Paris. Some individuals, without any other qualification than a sort of low cunning acquired in prison, were likewise attached to the police of safety, but they had no fixed employment, and were only paid according to the captures they made. There were also thieves who constantly followed their profession, and whose presence was tolerated on condition of their giving up to justice the malefactors they might by chance fall in with; sometimes it happened that, for lack of other objects, they would denounce their own comrades. After these tolerated thieves, came, in the third or fourth gradation, that swarm of abandoned profligates who lived with girls of infamous character. This ignoble caste occasionally supplied important directions for the taking of pickpockets and swindlers; generally, they came forward and offered the most useful information when they were anxious to procure the release of their mistresses who chanced to fall under the surveillance of the police. The women who lived with well-known

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and incorrigible offenders were useful auxiliaries, constantly furnishing accounts which enabled the police to send off from time to time numbers of these lost creatures upon their travels to Bicêtre: this last class was indeed the very refuse of society, and yet up to the present period it had been impossible to dispense with its aid; for lengthened experience had, unfortunately, but too well shown how impossible it was to depend on the zeal or intelligence of the inspecting officers. The intention of the administration was not to employ in the pursuit of robbers unpaid men, but yet it was easy to profit by the assistance of those who from some interested motive only lent themselves to the police, with a proviso that they should remain behind the curtain, and enjoy certain immunities. M. Henry had, for some time, felt how dangerous it was to make use of these double-edged weapons, and had long contemplated measures for getting rid of them; and this had induced him to have me enlisted in the service of the police, which he was anxious to clear of all men decidedly robbers by profession. There are cures only to be effected by the aid of poison, and perhaps the leprosy of society can only be extirpated by similar means; but in this case the poisonous dose administered was too powerful, and the proof is, that nearly all the secret agents at this period were caught in the very act of committing crime, and many of them are still at the bagnes.

When I entered the police, all these secret agents of both sexes were naturally leagued against me; and foreseeing that their reign was nearly at an end, they did all in their power to extend its period. I passed for a man inflexible and impartial; I would not permit that they should plunder in all quarters with impunity, and consequently they were my sworn foes. They spared no efforts to crush me. Useless endeavours! I braved the tempest as the time-rooted oak which scarcely stoops its head, despite the pitiless pelting of the storm.

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I was denounced daily, but the voices of my calumniators were powerless, ineffectual. M. Henry, who had the préfet's ear, answered for my actions; and it was resolved that all denunciations against me should be immediately communicated to me, and that I should be allowed to refute them in writing. This proof of confidence gave me pleasure, and without rendering me more sedulous or attentive to my duties, it proved to me, at least, that my superiors had rendered me justice, and nothing in the world could have made me deviate from the plan of conduct which I had laid down.

In every thing, enthusiasm is necessary if we would succeed. I did not hope to render the calling of a secret agent honourable, but I flattered myself with the idea of fulfilling its duties with honour. I was anxious to be esteemed upright, incorruptible, intrepid, and indefatigable; I wished to appear on all occasions prompt, adequate, and intelligent; and my successes conspired to give me the reputation I sought. Soon M. Henry took no steps without consulting me: we passed nights together in contriving plans and means of repressing crimes and abuses; which were so efficacious that, in a short time, the complaints of robberies were considerably diminished, because the number of robbers of all sorts was greatly reduced. I may even say, that there was a period, when the robbers of plate from houses, those who steal the luggage from coaches and carts, as well as pickpockets, gave no tokens of being in existence. At a later period, a new generation has sprung up, but they can never equal in dexterity Bombance, Marquis, Boucalt, Compère, Bouthey, Pranger, Dorlé, La Rose, Gavard, Martin, and other first-rate rogues whom I reduced to a state of inaction. It was no intention of mine to allow their successors the opportunity of acquiring so much skill.

For about six months I acted alone, excepting only a few common females who had devoted themselves

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to the service, when an unforeseen occurrence emancipated me from all dependence on the peace-officers, who had, up to this time, so managed as to take upon themselves all the merits of my discoveries. This circumstance proved greatly in my favour, as it completely exposed the weakness and inefficiency of the inspectors, who complained, with much vehemence, that I gave them too much to do. To come to the fact, I shall begin the narration from its earliest commencement.

In 1810, robberies of a new kind and inconceivable boldness suddenly awakened the police to the knowledge of the existence of a troop of malefactors of a novel description.

Nearly all the robberies had been committed by ladders and forcible entries; apartments on the first and even second floor had been broken into by these extraordinary thieves, who, till then, had confined themselves to rich houses; and it was evident that these robbers must have had a knowledge of the localities, by the method of their burglaries.

All my efforts to discover these adroit thieves were without success, when a burglary, which seemed almost impracticable, was committed in the Rue Saint-Claude, near the Rue Bourbon-Villeneuve, in an apartment in the second floor above the "entresol," in a house in which the commissary of police for the district actually resided. The cord of the lantern which hung at his house-door had served for a ladder.

A nosebag (a small bag in which corn is put for horses to feed from when on the coach-stand) had been left on the spot, which gave rise to a surmise that the perpetrators might be hackney-coachmen, or at least that hackney-coaches had been employed in the enterprise.

M. Henry directed me to make my observations amongst the coachmen, and I discovered that the nosebag had belonged to a man named Husson, who drove the fiacre, No. 712. I reported this: Husson was

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apprehended, and from him we obtained information concerning two brothers, named Delzève, the elder of whom was soon in the hands of the police; and on his interrogation by M. Henry, he made such important discoveries as led to the apprehension of one Métral, a room-cleaner (frotteur) in the palace of the empress Josephine. He was stated to be the receiver of the band, composed almost entirely of Savoyards, born in the department of Leman. The continuation of my search led to my securing the persons of the brothers Pissard, Grenier, Lebrun, Piessard, Mabou, called the apothecary, Serassé, Durand, &c. twenty-two in all, who were subsequently condemned to imprisonment.

These robbers were for the greater part messengers (commissionaires), room-cleaners, or coachmen; that is, they belonged to a class of individuals proverbial for honesty, and who from time immemorial had been celebrated for probity throughout Paris; in their district they were all considered as honest men, incapable of appropriating to themselves the property of another; and this opinion contributed to render them the more formidable, as the persons who employed them, either in sawing wood or in any other kind of work, had no distrust of them, and gave them free ingress and egress everywhere, and at all times. When it was known that they were implicated in a criminal affair, they were not believed to be guilty: and I myself, for some time, hesitated in my opinion. However, evidence was adduced which was against them, and the ancient renown of the Savoyards, in a capital in which they had resided unsuspected for ages, was blasted never again to flourish.

During the year 1812 I had rendered to justice the principals of the band; but Delzève, the younger, had baffled all efforts to capture him, and bid defiance to the pursuits of justice, when, on the 31st of December, M. Henry said to me, "I think, if we manage well, we can get hold of Ecrevisse (Delzève's cognomen): to-

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morrow will be new-year's day, and he will be sure to visit the washerwoman, who has so often given him an asylum, as well as his brother; I have a presentiment that he will be there this evening or during the night, or certainly early in the morning."

I was of the same opinion; and M. Henry ordered me to go, with three officers, and place ourselves on the watch, near the washerwoman's house, who lived in the Rue de Gressillon, Faubourg St Honoré, in the Petite-Pologne.

I received this command with a satisfaction which is always, with me, a presage of good luck. Attended by the three inspectors, I went, at seven o'clock in the evening, to the appointed spot. It was bitterly cold, the ground covered with snow, and never had winter been more severe.

We stationed ourselves in ambuscade; and, after many hours, the inspectors, nipped with cold and unable any longer to endure it, proposed that we should quit our station. I was half-frozen, having no covering but the light garment of a messenger. I made some remarks to them; and, although it would have been infinitely more agreeable to me to have retired, we determined to remain till midnight. Scarcely had the hour agreed on struck, than they claimed of me the fulfilment of my promise, and we quitted our post, which we had been ordered to keep till daybreak.

We went towards the Palais Royal; a coffee-house was open, which we entered to warm ourselves, and having taken a bowl of hot wine, we separated, each to go to his own home. As I went towards mine, I reflected on what I was doing.—"What!" said I to myself, "so soon forget instructions which have been given to me; thus to deceive the confidence of my superior; it is an unpardonable baseness! My conduct not only seems reprehensible, but I think that it even deserves the most severe punishment." I was in despair at having complied with the wishes of the inspectors; and, resolute in repairing my fault, deter-

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mined to return alone to the post assigned, and pass the night there, even if I died on the spot. I then returned to the Pologne, and ensconced myself in a corner, that I might not be seen by Delzève, in case he should come.

For an hour and a half I remained in this position, until my blood congealed, and I felt my courage weakening, when suddenly a luminous idea shone upon me. —At a short distance was a dunghill, whose smoke betrayed a state of fermentation: this depot is called the "voirie" (lay-stall): I ran towards it; and having made a hole in one corner, sufficiently deep to admit me up to my waist, I jumped into it, and a comfortable warmth soon reestablished the circulation of my blood. At five in the morning, I was still in my lurking-place, where I did very well, except from the fumes which invaded my nostrils. At length the door of the house, which was the one pointed out to me, opened to let out a woman, who did not shut it after her. Instantly, and without noise, I leaped from the dung-heap; and entering the court looked about me, but saw no light from any part.

I knew that Delzève's associates had a peculiar way of whistling for him; it was the coachman's whistle, and known to me; I imitated it; and, at the second attempt, I heard some one exclaim, "Who calls?"

"It is the 'chauffeur' (a coachman from whom Delzève had learnt to drive) who whistles for l'Ecrevisse (the crab)."

"Is it you?" cried the same voice, which I knew to be Delzève's.

"Yes; the chauffeur wants you. Come down."

"I am coming—wait a minute."

"It is very cold," I replied; "I will wait for you at the public-house at the corner; make haste—do you hear?"

The public-house was already open; for, on new-year's day, they have custom betimes. But I was not tempted to drink; and that I might trap Delzève, I

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opened the side door, and then letting it shut with violence, without actually going out, I concealed myself under a flight of steps. Soon afterwards Delzève came down, and on perceiving him I jumped at him, seized his collar, and holding a pistol to his breast, told him he was my prisoner. "Follow me," I said, "and make the slightest signal at your peril; besides, I am not alone."

Dumb with surprise, Delzève made no answer, but followed me mechanically. I fastened his hands, and he was then incapacitated from either resisting or flying from me.

I hastened to convey him away, and the clock struck six as we entered the Rue du Rocher; a hackney-coach was passing, which I hailed, but the man seeing me covered with dirt, hesitated, until I offered him double hire; and led by that, he condescended to take us up, and we were soon rolling over the pavement of Paris. To make assurance doubly sure, I tightened his wrist-cuffs, lest, having come to himself, he might have rebelled; and although, in a personal conflict, I should have been sure of victory, yet, as I contemplated bringing him to confession, I was unwilling to have any quarrel; and blows, which would have been inevitably the result of rebellion, would decidedly have produced this result.

Delzève felt aware of the impossibility of escape, and I endeavoured to make him hear reason; that I might completely wheedle (amadouer) him, I offered him some refreshment, which he accepted; and the coachman having procured us some wine, we kept driving about and drinking, without any determined plan.

It was still early, and persuaded that it would be advantageous to prolong our tête-à-tête, I proposed to Delzève, that we should go and breakfast in a place where we could have a private room. He was then quieted; and appearing hopeless of escape, accepted my offer, and I took him to the Cadran Bleu; but, before we got there, he had already told me many pieces

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of important information as to the number of his accomplices still at large in Paris; and I felt convinced that, at table, he would make "a clean breast of it" (se déboutonnerait complètement). I made him understand that the only way to propitiate the favour of justice, was to confess all he knew; and to fortify his resolution in this case, I used some arguments of a peculiar philosophy, which I have always employed with success in consoling criminals; and, at length, he was perfectly disposed to do all I wished, when the coach reached the cook's shop. I made him go up stairs first, and when I had ordered the breakfast, I told him that, being desirous of eating my meal at my ease, I must confine him as I wished. I agreed that he should be left sufficiently unshackled to exercise his arms at the game of knife and fork; and, at table, no one could desire greater freedom. He was not at all offended at the proposition, and I thus contrived it:—with two napkins I tied each leg to the foot of his chair, three or four inches from the bar, which prevented him from attempting to rise without the risk of breaking his head by a fall.

He breakfasted with much appetite, and promised to repeat before M. Henry all that he had confessed to me. At noon we left the café, Delzève being well primed with wine, and getting into a coach, quite friends and on good terms with each other, we reached the prefecture ten minutes afterwards. M. Henry was then surrounded by his police-officers, who were paying him the compliments of the new-year's day. I entered and addressed this salutation to him:—"I have the honour to wish you a happy and prosperous year, and to present to you the redoubtable Delzève."

"This is, indeed, a new year's gift," said M. Henry to me, when he perceived the prisoner, and then turning to the officers of peace and security: "It would be a desirable thing, gentlemen, that each of you should have a similar present to offer to your préfet." Immediately afterwards he gave me the

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order for conducting Delzève to the depot, saying, with much kindness, "Vidocq, go and take some repose; I am much satisfied with your conduct."

The apprehension of Delzève was productive of the highest testimonials of satisfaction to me, but at the same time it only augmented the hatred which the peace officers and their agents cherished towards me; only one of them, M. Thibaut, rendered me the fullest justice.

Joining chorus with the thieves and malefactors, all the agents who were not successful as police-officers, assailed me with the utmost virulence. According to them, it was scandalous, abominable to exercise my zeal in purging society of the evil-doers which troubled its repose. I had been a famous robber; there was no species of crime that I had not perpetrated: such were the reports which were widely spread, and generally accredited. Some perhaps believed them partly true; the thieves, at least, were persuaded that I had followed the vocation in which they worked; and in saying so they believed what they asserted. Before they were caught in my traps, it was necessary that they should think me one of themselves; and once taken, they considered me as a false comrade but still not the less an "out-and-outer," (un grinche de la haute pégre) only that I plundered with impunity because I was necessary to the police: this was, at all events, the current tale in the prisons. The peace-officers and their satellites were not slow in giving all confirmation to such reports; and then, perhaps, in becoming the echoes of the wretches who had cause to complain of me, they did not think that they lied so much as they really did; for, taking no pains to learn what had been the course of my early life, they were to a certain point excusable in thinking that I must have been a thief, since from time immemorial, all the secret agents had followed that reputable means of getting a livelihood. They knew that such was the commencement of the lives of Goupil, Compère, Floren-

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tin, Levesque, Coco-Lacour, Bourdarie, Cadet Herriez, Henri Lain, Cesar Vioque, Bouthey, Gaffre, Manigant, and, in fact, all who had preceded or were coadjutors with me. Nearly all the agents had returned to their old way of life, and as I appeared much more crafty, much more active, much more enterprising than they, the conclusion was drawn, that being the most adroit of spies, was the result of having been the most expert of robbers. This error in reasoning I forgive; but the assertion that I continued daily to plunder, is an intentional calumny.

M. Henry, struck with the absurdity of such an imputation, replied to it by this unanswerable objection. He said, "If it be true that Vidocq commits daily robberies, it is an additional charge against your vigilance; he is alone, you are numerous; you say that he plunders, then how is it that you do not catch him in the fact? Unaided, he has contrived to secure many of your colleagues whilst in the commission of offences, and yet you, all of you, are unable to do so with him."

The officers were somewhat puzzled how to reply, and thereupon kept silence; but as it was but too evident that the enmity they bore me would always lead them to cross my plans, the prefect of police determined on making me totally independent of them. From that moment I was free to act as I thought fittest for the public welfare. I now only received orders from M. Henry personally, and was amenable for my conduct to him only.

I would have redoubled my zeal had it been possible; and M. Henry did not fear that my exertions would fall off; but as he had already learnt that some persons had threatened my life, he appointed an auxiliary, who was charged with following me at a distance, and watching over me, to ward off any blows which might be aimed at me secretly. The isolated situation in which I was placed greatly favoured my success, and I apprehended a multitude of robbers, who would long have escaped search had I not been emancipated from all interference

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from the police agents and inspectors. But being so much in action, I became more known. The robbers swore they would get rid of me, and frequently I narrowly escaped their blows; my physical strength, and I may add my courage, freed me victoriously from all ambuscades, however craftily planned. Many attempts, in which my assailants always came off second best, taught them that I was fully resolved to sell my life most dearly.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

I seek two celebrated thieves—The music mistress, or another "mother of robbers"—A metamorphosis, which is not the last—Scenes of hospitality—The false keys—Ramifications of an admirable plot—Perfidy of an agent—The plan detected—Mother Noel accuses me of having robbed her—My innocence recognised—My female accuser sent to St. Lazarre.

It is very rare that a fugitive galley-slave escapes with any intention of amendment; most frequently the aim is to gain the capital, and then put in practice the vicious lessons acquired at the bagnes, which, like most of our prisons, are schools in which they perfect themselves in the art of appropriating to themselves the property of another. Nearly all celebrated robbers only become expert after passing some time at the galleys. Some have undergone five or six sentences before they become thorough scoundrels; such as the famous Victor Desbois, and his comrade Mongenet, called Le Tambour (Drummer), who during various visits to Paris committed a vast many of those robberies on which people love to descant as proofs of boldness and address.

These two men, who for many years were sent away with every chain, and as frequently escaped, were once more back again in Paris; the police got information of it, and I received the order to search for them. All testified that they had acquaintances with other robbers no less formidable than themselves. A music mistress, whose son, called Noel with the Spectacles (Noel aux bésicles), a celebrated robber, was suspected of harbouring these thieves. Madame Noel was a well-educated woman and an admirable musician; she was esteemed a most accomplished performer by the middle class of tradespeople, who employed her to give lessons to their daughters. She was well known in the Marais and the Quartier Saint Denis, where the polish of her

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manners, the elegance of her language, the gentility of her dress, and that indescribable air of superiority which the reverses of fortune can never entirely destroy, gave rise to the current belief that she was a member of one of those numerous families to whom the Revolution had only left its hauteur and its regrets.

To those who heard and saw her without being acquainted, madame Noel was a most interesting little woman; and besides, there was something touching in her situation; it was a mystery, and no one knew what had become of her husband. Some said that she had been early left in a state of widowhood; others that she had been forsaken; and a third affirmed that she was a victim of seduction. I know not which of these conjectures approaches nearest to the truth, but I know very well that madame Noel was a little brunette, whose sparkling eye and roguish look were softened down by that gentle demeanour which seemed to increase the sweetness of her smile and the tone of her voice, which was in the highest degree musical. There was a mixture of the angel and demon in her face, but the latter perhaps preponderated; for time had developed those traits which characterise evil thoughts.

Madame Noel was obliging and good, but only towards those individuals who were at issue with justice; she received them as the mother of a soldier would welcome the comrade of her son. To ensure a welcome with her, it was enough to belong to the same "regiment" as Noel with the Spectacles; and then, as much for love of him and from inclination perhaps, she would do all in her power to aid, and was consequently looked upon as a "mother of robbers." At her house they found shelter; it was she who provided for all their wants, she carried her complaisance so far as to seek "jobs of work" for them; and when a passport was indispensably requisite for their safety, she was not quiet until by some means she had succeeded in procuring one. Madame Noel had many friends among her own sex, and it was generally in one of their names

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that the passport was obtained. A powerful mixture of oxygenated muriatic acid obliterated the writing; and the description of the gentleman who required it, as well as the name which it suited his purpose to assume, replaced the feminine description. Madame Noel had generally by her a supply of these accommodating passports, which were filled according to circumstances, and the wants of the party requiring such assistance.

All the galley-slaves were children of madame Noel, but those were the most in favour who could give her any account of her son; for them her devotion was boundless; her house was open to all fugitives, who made it their rendezvous; and there must be gratitude even amongst them, for the police were informed that they came frequently to mother Noel's for the pleasure of seeing her only; she was the confidante of all their plans, all their adventures, all their fears; in fact, they communicated all unreservedly, and never had cause to regret their reliance on her fidelity.

Mother Noel had never seen me; my features were quite unknown to her, although she had frequently heard of my name. There was then no difficulty in presenting myself before her, without giving her any cause for alarm; but to get her to point out to me the hiding place of the men whom I sought to detect, was the end I aimed at, and I felt that it would be impossible to attain it without much skill and management. At first, I resolved on passing myself off as a fugitive galley-slave; but it was necessary to borrow the name of some thief, whom her son or his comrades had mentioned to her in advantageous terms. Moreover, a little resemblance was positively requisite, and I endeavoured to recollect if there were not one of the galley-slaves whom I knew who had been associated with Noel with the Spectacles, and I could not remember one of my age, or whose person and features at all resembled mine. At last, by dint of much effort

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of memory I recalled to mind one Germain, alias Royer, alias "the Captain," who had been an intimate acquaintance of Noel's, and although our similarity was very slight, yet I determined on personating him.

Germain, as well as myself, had often escaped from the bagnes, and that was the only point of resemblance between us: he was about my age, but a smaller framed man; he had dark brown hair, mine was light; he was thin, and I tolerably stout; his complexion was sallow, and mine fair, with a very clear skin; besides, Germain had an excessively long nose, took a vast deal of snuff, which begriming his nostrils outside, and stuffing them up within, gave him a peculiarly nasal tone of voice.

I had much to do in personating Germain; but the difficulty did not deter me: my hair, cut *à la mode des bagnes*, was dyed black, as well as my beard, after it had attained a growth of eight days; to embrown my countenance I washed it with walnut liquor; and to perfect the imitation, I garnished my upper lip thickly with a kind of coffee-grounds, which I plastered on by means of gum arabic, and thus became as nasal in my twang as Germain himself. My feet were doctored with equal care; I made blisters on them by rubbing in a certain composition of which I had obtained the recipe at Brest. I also made the marks of the fetters; and when all my toilet was finished, dressed myself in the suitable garb. I had neglected nothing which could complete the metamorphosis, neither the shoes nor the marks of those horrid letters G A L. The costume was perfect; and the only thing wanting was a hundred of those companionable insects which people the solitudes of poverty, and which were, I believe, together with locusts and toads, one of the seven plagues of old Egypt. I procured some for money; and as soon as they were a little accustomed to their new domicile, which was speedily the case, I directed my steps towards the residence of madame Noel, in the Rue Tiquetonne.

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I arrived there, and knocking at the door, she opened it: a glance convincing her how matters stood with me, she desired me to enter, and on finding myself alone with her, I told her who I was. "Ah, my poor lad," she cried, "there is no occasion to tell me where you have come from; I am sure you must be dying with hunger?"—"Oh yes," I answered, "I am indeed hungry; I have tasted nothing for twenty-four hours." Instantly, without further question, she went out, and returned with a dish of hog's puddings and a bottle of wine, which she placed before me. I did not eat, I actually devoured; I stuffed myself, and all had disappeared without my saying a word between my first mouthful and my last. Mother Noel was delighted at my appetite, and when the cloth was removed she gave me a dram. "Ah, maman," I exclaimed, embracing her, "you restore me to life; Noel told me how good and kind you were:" and I then began to give her a statement of how I had left her son eighteen days before, and gave her information of all the prisoners in whom she felt interested. The details were so true and well known, that she could have no idea that I was an impostor.

"You must have heard of me," I continued; "I have gone through many an enterprise, and experienced many a reverse. I am called Germain, or the Captain; you must know my name?"

"Yes, yes, my friend," she said, "I know you well; my son and his friends have told me of your misfortunes; welcome, welcome, my dear captain. But, heavens! what a state you are in; you must not remain in such a plight. I see you are infested with those wretched tormenting beasts who——; but I will get you a change of linen, and contrive something as a comfortable dress for you."

I expressed my gratitude to madame Noel; and when I saw a good opportunity, without giving cause for the slightest suspicion, I asked what had become of Victor Desbois and his comrade Mongenet. "Desbois and

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Le Tambour? Ah! my dear, do not mention them, I beg of you," she replied; "that rogue Vidocq has given them very great uneasiness; since one Joseph (Joseph Longueville, an old police inspector,) whom they have twice met in the streets, told them that there would soon be a search in this quarter, they have been compelled to cut and run, to avoid being taken."

"What," cried I with a disappointed air, "are they no longer in Paris?"

"Oh, they are not very far distant," replied mother Noel; "they have not quitted the environs of the 'great village' (Paris); I dare say we shall soon see them, for I trust they will speedily pay me a visit. I think they will be delighted to find you here."

"Oh, I assure you," said I, "that they will not be more delighted at the meeting than myself; and if you can write to them, I am sure they would eagerly send for me to join them."

"If I knew where they were," replied mother Noel, "I would go myself and seek for them to please you; but I do not know their retreat, and the best thing for us to do is to be patient and await their arrival."

In my quality of a new comer, I excited all madame Noel's compassion and solicitude, and she attended to nothing but me. "Are you known to Vidocq and his two bull-dogs, Levesque and Compère?" she inquired.

"Alas! yes," was my reply; "they have caught me twice."

"In that case, then, be on your guard: Vidocq is often disguised; he assumes characters, costumes, and shapes to get hold of unfortunates like yourself."

We conversed together for two hours, when madame Noel offered me a foot bath, which I accepted; and when it was prepared, I took off my shoes and stockings, on which she discovered my wounded feet, and said, with a most commiserating tone and manner, "How I pity you; what must you suffer! Why did you not tell me of this at first; you deserve to be scolded for it." And whilst thus reproaching me, she

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examined my feet; and then pricking the blisters, drew a piece of worsted through each, and anointed my feet with a salve which she assured me would have the effect of speedily curing them.

There was something of antique custom in these cares of kind hospitality; and all that was needed to the poetry of the action was, that I should have been some illustrious traveller, and madame Noel a noble stranger. The bath concluded, she brought me some clean linen; and, as she thought of all that was needful, added a razor, recommending me to shave. "I shall then see," she added, "about buying you some workman's clothes, as that is the best disguise for men who wish to pass unnoticed; and besides, good luck will turn up, and then you will get yourself some new ones."

As soon as I was thoroughly cleansed, mother Noel conducted me to a sleeping room, a small apartment which served as the workshop for false keys, the entrance to which was concealed by several gowns hanging from a row of pegs. "Here," said she, "is a bed in which your friends have slept three or four times; and you need not fear that the police will hunt you out; you may sleep secure as a dormouse."

"I am really in want of sleep," I replied, and begged her permission to take some repose, on which she left me to myself. Three hours afterwards I awoke, and on getting up we renewed our conference. It was necessary to be armed at all points to deceive madame Noel; there was not a trick or custom of the bagnes with which she was not thoroughly informed; she knew not only the names of all the robbers whom she had seen, but was acquainted with every particular of the life of a great many others; and related with enthusiasm anecdotes of the most noted, particularly of her son, for whom she had as much veneration as love.

"The dear boy, you would be delighted to see him!" said I.

"Yes, yes, overjoyed."

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"Well, it is a happiness you will soon enjoy; for Noel has made arrangements for an escape, and is now only awaiting the propitious moment."

Madame Noel was happy in the expectation of seeing her son, and shed tears of tenderness at the very thoughts of it. I will own that I was affected, and for a moment wavered if for once I would not betray my duties as a police agent; but when I reflected again on the crimes committed by the Noel family, and considered what was due to the interests of society, I remained firm and determined in my resolution to go through with my enterprise at all risks.

In the course of conversation, mother Noel asked me if I had any affair (plan of robbery) in contemplation; and after having offered to procure me one, in case I was not provided, she questioned me on my skill in fabricating keys. I told her I was as adroit as Fossard. "If that be the case," she rejoined, "I am easy, and you shall be soon furnished; for as you are so clever, I will go and buy at the ironmonger's a key which you can fit to my safety lock, so that you will have ingress and egress whenever you require it."

I expressed my feelings of obligation for so great a proof of her kindness; and as it was growing late, I went to bed reflecting on the mode of getting away from this lair without running the risk of being assassinated, if perchance any of the villains whom I was seeking, should arrive before I had taken the necessary precautions.

I did not sleep, and arose as soon as I heard madame Noel lighting her fire; she said I was an early riser, and that she would go and procure me what I wanted. A moment afterwards she brought me a key not cut into wards, and gave me files and a small vice, which I fixed on my bed; and as soon as my tools were in readiness, I began my work in presence of my hostess, who seeing that I was perfectly conversant with the business, complimented me on my skill; and what she most admired was the expedition of my work, for in fact,

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in less than four hours, I had perfected a most workmanlike key, which I tried, and it fitted most accurately. A few touches of the file completed the instrument; and, like the rest, I had the means of unobstructed entrance whenever I wished to visit the house.

I was madame Noel's boarder; and, after dinner, I told her I was inclined to take a turn in the dusk, that I might find whether "a job" I contemplated was yet feasible, and she approved the suggestion, at the same time recommending me to use all caution. "That thief of a Vidocq," she observed, "is a thorn in one's path; mind him;—and, if I were you, before I made any attempts, I would wait until my feet were well." "I shall not go far," I replied; "nor stay away long." This assurance of a speedy return seemed to quiet her fears. "Well then, go," she said; and I went out limping.

So far all succeeded to my most sanguine wishes; it was impossible to stand better with mother Noel; but, by remaining in her house, who would guarantee that I should not be knocked on the head? Might not two or three galley-slaves arrive together, recognise me, and attack me? Then farewell to all my plottings; and it was incumbent, that, without losing the fruit of my friendship with mother Noel, I should prepare myself for the contingent danger. It would have been the height of imprudence to have given her cause to think that I had any motives for avoiding contact with her guests, and I consequently endeavoured so to lead her on, that she should herself suggest to me the necessity of quitting her house; that is, that she should advise me no longer to think of sleeping in her domicile.

I had observed that madame Noel was very intimate with a fruit-seller who lived in the house; and I sent to this woman one of my agents named Manceau, whom I charged to ask her secretly, and yet with a want of skill, for some accounts of madame Noel. I had dictated the questions, and was the more certain

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that the fruit-woman would not fail to communicate the particulars, as I had desired my man to beg her to observe secrecy.

The event proved that I was not deceived;—no sooner had my agent fulfilled his mission, than the fruit-woman hastened to madame Noel with an account of what had passed; who, in her turn, lost no time in telling me. On the look-out at the steps of the door of her officious neighbour, as soon as she saw me, she came to me, and, without further preface, desired me to follow her, which I did; and, on reaching the Place des Victoires, she stopped, and looking about her to be assured that no one was in hearing, she told me what had passed:—"So," said she, in conclusion, "you see, my poor Germain, that it would not be prudent for you to sleep at my house; you must even be cautious how you approach it by day." Mother Noel had no idea that this circumstance, which she bewailed so greatly, was of my own planning; and, that I might remove all suspicion from her mind, I pretended to be more vexed at it than she was, and cursed and swore bitterly at that blackguard Vidocq, who would not leave us at peace. I deprecated the necessity to which I was reduced, of finding a shelter out of Paris, and took leave of madame Noel, who, wishing me good luck and a speedy return, put a thirty-sous-piece into my hand.

I knew that Desbois and Mongenet were expected; and I was also aware that there were comers and goers who visited the house, whether madame Noel was there or not; and she was often absent, giving music lessons in the city. It was important that I should know these gentry; and to achieve this, I disguised several of my auxiliaries, and stationed them at the corners of the street, where, mixing with the errand boys and messengers, their presence excited no suspicion.

These precautions taken, that I might testify all due appearance of fear, I allowed two days to pass before

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I again visited madame Noel; and this period having elapsed, I went one evening to her house, accompanied by a young man, whom I introduced as the brother of a female with whom I had once lived; and who, having met me accidentally in Paris, had given me an asylum. This young man was a secret agent, but I took care to tell mother Noel that he had my fullest confidence, and that she might consider him as my second self; and, as he was not known to the spies, I had chosen him to be my messenger to her whenever I did not judge it prudent to show myself. "Henceforward," I added, "he will be our go-between, and will come every two or three days, that I may have information of you and your friends."

"I'faith," said mother Noel, "you have lost a pleasure; for, twenty minutes sooner, and you would have seen a lady of your acquaintance here."

"Ah! who was it?"

"Mongenet's sister."

"Oh! indeed; she has often seen me with her brother."

"Yes; when I mentioned you, she described you as exactly as possible;—'a lanky chap,' said she, 'with his nose always grimed with snuff.'"

Madame Noel deeply regretted that I had not arrived before Mongenet's sister had departed; but certainly not so much as I rejoiced at my narrow escape from an interview which would have destroyed all my projects; for, if this woman knew Germain, she also knew Vidocq; and it was impossible that she could have mistaken one for the other, so great was the difference between us! Although I had altered my features so as to deceive, yet the resemblance which, in description, seemed exact, would not stand the test of a critical examination, and particularly the reminiscences of intimacy. Mother Noel then gave me a very useful warning, when she informed me that Mongenet's sister was a very frequent visitor at her house. From thenceforward I resolved that this female should

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never catch a glimpse of my countenance; and, to avoid meeting with her, whenever I visited madame Noel, I sent my pretended brother-in-law first, who, when she was not there, had instructions to let me know it, by sticking a wafer on the window. At this signal I entered, and my aide-de-camp betook himself to his post in the neighbourhood, to guard against any disagreeable surprise. Not very far distant were other auxiliaries, to whom I had confided mother Noel's key, that they might come to my succour in case of danger; for, from one instant to another, I might fall suddenly amongst a gang of fugitives, or some of the galley-slaves might recognise and attack me, and then a blow of my fist against a square of glass in the window was the signal which was to denote my need of assistance, to equalize the contending parties.

Thus were my schemes concerted, and the finale was at hand. It was on a Tuesday, and a letter from the men I was in quest of, announced their intended arrival on the Friday following; a day which I intended should be for them a black Friday. At the first dawn I betook myself to a cabaret in the vicinity, and, that they might have no motive for watching me, supposing, as was their custom, that they should traverse the street several times up and down before they entered madame Noel's domicile, I first sent my pretended brother-in-law, who returned soon afterwards, and told me that Mongenet's sister was not there, and that I might safely enter. "You are not deceiving me?" said I to my agent, whose tone appeared altered and embarrassed, and fixing on him one of those looks which penetrate the very heart's core, I thought I observed one of those ill-suppressed contractions of the muscles of the face which accompany a premeditated lie: and then, quick as lightning, the thought came over me that I was betrayed,—that my agent was a traitor. We were in a private room, and, without a moment's hesitation, I grasped his throat with violence, and told him, in presence of his comrades, that I was informed

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of his perfidy, and that if he did not instantly confess all, I would shoot him on the spot. Dismayed at my penetration and determined manner, he stammered out a few words of excuse, and falling on his knees, confessed that he had discovered all to mother Noel.

This baseness, had I not thus detected it, would probably have cost me my life, but I did not think of any personal resentment; it was only the interest of society which I cared for, and which I regretted to see wrecked when so near port. The traitor, Manceau, was put in confinement, and, young as he was, having many old offences to expiate, was sent to Bicêtre, and then to the isle of Oleron, where he terminated his career. It may be conjectured that the fugitives did not return again to the Rue Ticquetonne; but they were, notwithstanding, apprehended a short time afterwards.

Mother Noel did not forgive the trick I had played her; and, to satisfy her revenge, she, one day, had all her goods taken away; and when this had been effected, went out without closing her door, and returned crying out that she had been robbed. The neighbours were made witnesses, a declaration was made before a commissary, and mother Noel pointed me out as the thief; because, she said, I had a key of her apartments. The accusation was a grave one, and she was instantly sent to the prefecture of police, and the next day I received the information. My justification was not difficult, for the préfet, as well as M. Henry, saw through the imposture; and we managed so well, that mother Noel's property was discovered, proof was obtained of the falsity of the charge, and, to give her time for repentance, she was sentenced for six months to St. Lazarre. Such was the issue and the consequences of an enterprise, in which I had not failed to use all precaution; and I have often achieved success in affairs, in which arrangements had been made, not so skilfully concerted or so ably executed.

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CHAPTER XXX.

The police officers sent in pursuit of a celebrated robber—They are unable to discover him—Great anger of one of them—I promise another new-year's gift to the préfet—The yellow curtains and the hump-backed female—I am a good citizen—A messenger puts me on the right scent—The chest of the prefecture of police—I am a coal-man—The fright of a vintner and his wife—The little Norman in tears—The danger of giving Eau de Cologne—Carrying off of mademoiselle Tonneau—A search—The thief takes me for his mate—Thieves laugh at locksmiths—The jump from the window—The effects of a long slide, or broken stitches.

It has been seen how greatly I was thwarted by the infidelity of an agent, and I have long since learnt that there is no secret well kept but that which we tell to nobody; and sad experience more and more convinced me of the necessity of acting alone in all my operations, when I could do so; and I pursued this mode, as will be seen, on a very important occasion.

After having undergone several sentences, two fugitives of the isles, named Goreau and Florentin, called Chatelain (governor), of whom I have already spoken, were detained at Bicêtre, as incorrigible robbers. Weary of confinement in these cells, where they were buried alive, they sent to M. Henry a letter, in which they offered to give such information as should lead to the apprehension of several of their comrades, who were daily perpetrating robberies in Paris. Fossard, sentenced for life, who had frequently escaped from the bagnes, was the one marked out as the most dangerous. "He was," they wrote, "unequalled for intrepidity, and must be attacked with caution; for, always armed to the teeth, he had resolved on blowing out the brains of that police-agent who should be hardy enough to attempt to apprehend him."

The heads of the police asked nothing better than to free the capital from such a daring thief, and their

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first idea was to employ me in discovering him; but the informers having suggested to M. Henry that I was too well known to Fossard and his concubine not to defeat an operation which must be most delicately effected, it was decided that the affair should be intrusted to the skill of some police-officers. To them therefore were given all the necessary instructions to regulate their searches; but, either they were not lucky, or they did not especially approve a rencontre with Fossard, who was "armed to the teeth," for he continued his exploits, and the numerous complaints to which his activity gave rise, announced, that in spite of their apparent zeal, these gentlemen, as usual, made more noise than work.

The result was, that the préfet, who preferred doings to sayings, sent for them one day, and reprimanded them in a manner which must have been severe, to judge by the discontent which they could not help testifying.

They had just received this official proof of disapprobation, when I happened to meet, in the market of Saint-Jean, M. Yvrier, one of the officers in question, whom I saluted, and he thereupon accosted me, almost bursting with rage, saying, "Ah! there you are, Mr. Do-so-much; you are the cause of our having been reprimanded about that Fossard, the fugitive galley-slave, who they say is in Paris. If we are to believe monsieur le préfet, there is no one but you who can do anything. If Vidocq, he said to us, had been ordered to this business, we should have had this fellow apprehended long ago. Well, then, let us see, M. Vidocq; set your wits to work to find him, you who are so very clever, and prove that you have all the talent that they say you have."

M. Yvrier was an old man, and it was respect for his age which checked my reply to his impertinence; and although I was wounded by the tone of his address, I did not care to show it, contenting myself with replying, that I had not then the leisure to occupy

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myself about Fossard, that he was a capture I should reserve till the first of January, that I might have a suitable new year's gift for M. le préfet, as the previous year I had brought the famous Delzève.

"Go on your own way," replied M. Yvrier, irritated at this boast; "the event will show what you are; a presumptuous fellow, who creates difficulties to show his skill in surmounting them;" and he left me, grumbling out from between his teeth some other epithets and qualities which I neither understood nor heeded.

After this scene, I went to M. Henry's private room, to whom I related it. "Ah! they wince—they are angry, are they?" said he, laughing; "so much the better; it proves that they defer to your ability. I see," added M. Henry, "that these gentlemen are like the eunuchs of a seraglio; they cannot do themselves, and would not allow others to be doing." He then gave me the following particulars:—

"Fossard lives in Paris, in a street leading from the market-place to a boulevard that is somewhere between the Rue Comtesse d'Artois and the Rue Poissonnière, passing by the Rue Montorgueil and the Petit Carreau: on what story his apartments are is unknown; but the windows may be recognised by having yellow silk curtains and other curtains of embroidered muslin. In the same house resides a little hump-backed woman, a seamstress, and intimate with the female who lives with Fossard."

These particulars were, it may be seen, not sufficiently definite to lead at once to the spot we wished to discover.

A hump-backed woman and yellow curtains with others of embroidered muslin, were not certainly to be found readily in the extent of ground which was to be explored. Perhaps such a combination might be found more than once in the limits prescribed. How many humps, old as well as young, are there not to be found in Paris? And who could count all the yellow curtains? In fact, the data were excessively

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vague, and yet the problem was to be solved; and I determined to try, if by dint of all my acumen and research, my good genius would not direct my finger to the very spot I sought.

I was in doubt as to what steps I should first take; but as I had generally found that, in all my undertakings it was principally from females that I gleaned my information, whether women or girls, I soon determined on the disguise which was best adapted for my purpose. It was apparent that I must assume the guise of a very respectable gentleman, and, consequently, by means of some false wrinkles, a pig-tail, snowy white ruffles, a large gold-headed cane, a three-cornered hat, buckles, breeches and coat to match,—I was metamorphosed into one of those good sexagenarian citizens, whom all old ladies admire. I had the precise appearance and air of one of those rich old boys of the Marais, whose rubicund and jolly countenance proves the ease of his circumstances, and the desire to bestow charity on those who need it, by way of a recompense to fortune. I was very sure that the hump-backed women would set their caps at me; and I had the appearance of so good a man, that it was impossible they would make any attempts at deceiving me.

Thus disguised, I went into the streets, gazing upwards to discover all the curtains of the prescribed colour. I was so much occupied with this investigation that I was entirely lost to all around me. Had I been a little less substantial looking I might have been taken for a metaphysician, or perhaps for a poet who was seeking a couplet in the region of the chimney-pots; twenty times I narrowly escaped the cabriolets; on all sides the cry of "Gare! gare!" (mind, mind) assailed me, and then, on turning round, I was under the wheel, or else close beside a horse; sometimes, whilst I was wiping the dirt from my sleeve, a lash of a whip came across my face, or, if the driver were less brutal, it was some such salutation as this:—"Out of

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the way, old dunny-head, or else, "Come, what are you at, old stupid?"

My work was not to be completed in a single day, even as far as the yellow curtains went; I marked down more than one hundred and fifty in my memorandum book, which gave choice enough in all conscience. Had I not, as the saying is, worked for the king of Prussia?—(i. e. unavailingly.) Might not the curtains, behind which Fossard was concealed, have been taken down and replaced by white, red, or green ones? However, if chance was against me she might yet throw out some favourable hint for my guidance; and I took courage, although it is a somewhat painful task for a sexagenarian to ascend and descend a hundred and fifty staircases, consisting at least of seven hundred and fifty stories—to take more than thirty thousand steps, or twice the height of Chimborazo; but as I felt my breath good, and my legs strong, I undertook the task, sustained by the same hope as that which impelled the Argonauts to sail in quest of the golden fleece. It was my hump-backed lady that I sought; and in my ascents, in how many landing-places have I not stood centinel for hours together, in the persuasion that my lucky star would shine upon her? The heroic Don Quixote was not more ardent in the pursuit of his Dulcinea. I knocked at the doors of all the seamstresses; I examined them one after another, but no humps; they were all perfectly formed; or if by chance they had a projection, it was not a deviation of the spine, but one of those temporary exuberances which resolve themselves into maternity.

Thus passed several days without presenting to my longing eyes the object of my search, and I was heartily tired of my job, for every night my back ached past bearing, and yet the work was to be re-commenced the next morning. I dared ask no questions; for although then some charitable soul might have put me on the right scent, yet I might get into danger; and at

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last, fatigued with this unsatisfactory mode of search, I determined to adopt another.

I have remarked that hump-backed women are generally very inquisitive, and great chatterers; they are generally the news-distributors of the district, and if not, they are then the registers of petty slanders, and nothing passes with which they are not acquainted. Impressed with this idea, I concluded that, under pretext of getting her little requisites supplied, the unknown humpy lady, who had already cost me so much trouble, would not fail, any more than many others, to come and have her wonted gossip at the milkman's, the baker's, the fruiterer's, the mercer's, or the grocer's. I resolved therefore to station myself at the doors of several of these chattering shops, and as every humpy woman, anxious for a husband, makes a great parade of her abilities as a clever caterer, I was persuaded that mine would be on foot early in the morning, and that I ought, to see her, to station myself at an early hour at my post of observation, and accordingly I went there at daybreak.

I first employed myself in considering how best to take my measures. To what milk-woman would a hump-backed lady give the preference? Certainly to her who had most gossip, and sold cheapest. There was one at the corner of the Rue Thevenot, who seemed to me to combine these two qualities; she had about her a great number of small cans, and from the midst of her circle did not cease to talk and serve, serve and talk. Her customers babbled away to their hearts' content, and she chattered as indefatigably as her customers; but this was not of any consequence to me; I had pitched upon an admirable and likely spot, and was determined not to lose sight of it.

On going to my second watch in the evening, I impatiently awaited the arrival of my female Esop,

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but there were only young girls, well made, slender, with good figures, easy appearance, neatly attired, and not one of them that was not as straight and upright as the letter I. I was beginning to despair, when at length my star beamed in the horizon; I saw the Venus, the prototype of all humped women! Ye gods! how handsome she appeared; and how splendid was the contour of that prominent feature for which I had so anxiously watched,—her adorable hump! I gave myself time to contemplate this protuberance, which naturalists should, I think, take into consideration, and enumerate an additional race in the human species. I thought I was gazing on one of those fairies of the middle age, in whom a deformity of this kind was "a double charm." This supernatural being, or rather extra-natural, approached the milk-woman, and having gossiped for some time, as I had anticipated, she took her cream; she then entered the grocer's; then paused a moment at the tripe-shop, where she procured some lights, probably for her cat; and then, her stores provided, she turned off in the Rue du Petit Carreau, down the gateway, to a house of which the ground-floor was occupied by a working turner. I cast my eyes instantly on the windows, but, alas! no yellow curtains met my longing lingering look. I however made the reflection which had before suggested itself, that curtains, of whatever shade, have not the immobility of an original hump; and I resolved not to retire until I had some converse with the enchanting little lump of deformity, whose appearance had so truly enchanted me. I surmised, that in spite of my disappointment with regard to one of the main circumstances described for my guidance, yet that a conversation would elicit some useful information to lighten my path.

I determined to ascend the staircase; and on getting up to the first landing-place, inquired for "a little lady rather deformed."—"Oh, it is the seamstress you want," was the reply, attended by a significant grin.

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"Yes, the seamstress I want; a person who has one shoulder somewhat higher than the other." Again I was laughed at, and her apartment pointed out as on the third story. Although her neighbours were very complaisant, I was rather nettled at their chuckling and laughing; it was exceedingly unpolite; but such was my tolerance, that I freely pardoned the expression of their mirth; and was not that commendable in me? It preserved the character I had assumed. The door was shown to me; I knocked, and it was opened by my darling little Humpa herself; and after fifty apologies for the visit, I begged her to give me a few moments' audience, adding, that I had personal business to discuss with her.

"Mademoiselle," said I, with a solemn tone, after she had seated me opposite to herself, "you are ignorant of the motive which has led me hither; but when you shall know it, perhaps the step I have taken will excite your interest."

The hump-backed damsel thought that I was going to make an open avowal; the colour rushed to her cheeks, and her look became animated, although she cast her eyes on the ground. I continued—

"Doubtless, you will be astonished that at my age one can be as deeply enamoured as at twenty years old."

"Ah, sir, you are still young," said the amiable Humpina, whose mistake I would not allow to be prolonged.

"Why, pretty well for that," I added, "but it is not of that I would speak. You know that in Paris it is not an uncommon thing for a man and woman to live together without the benediction of holy Mother Church."

"What do you take me for, sir, to make such a proposal to me?" cried the little Humpetta, without giving me time to finish my sentence. I smiled at her mistake, and continued: "I have no intention to make any such proposition; I only request that you will

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have the goodness to give me some information respecting a young lady, who I am told lives in this house with a gentleman who passes for her husband."—"I know nothing at all about it" answered my little lady, very snappishly.

I then gave her a tolerably accurate description of Fossard and the demoiselle Tonneau, his lady.

"Ah, I now know," said she; "a man of your figure and size, about thirty or five-and-thirty years of age, a good-looking gentleman: the lady, a pretty brunette, beautiful eyes, lovely teeth, charming mouth, superb eyelashes, dark brows, nose a little turned up, with a most engaging and modest demeanour. They did live here, but they have removed." I entreated her to give me their new address; and on her reply, that she did not know it, I weepingly besought her to aid in the recovery of an ungrateful creature, whom I still fondly, dotingly loved, despite her perfidy.

The seamstress was touched. The tears I shed moved her tender heart; and feeling that I gained ground, I became more and more pathetic. "Ah! her infidelity will cause my death: pity, commiserate a wretched husband; I conjure you, do not conceal from me her retreat, and I shall owe you more than life."

Your hump-backed women are compassionate; moreover, a husband is, in their eyes, so inappreciable a treasure; and as they are not possessed of one, they cannot imagine how any one can be unfaithful; and thus my seamstress held adultery in utter abhorrence. She sincerely pitied me, and said she would do all in her power to serve me. "Unfortunately," she added, "their goods having been removed by porters not belonging to the district, I am completely ignorant of where they have gone, or what has become of them; but would you like to see the landlady?" As I had no doubt of her sincerity, I went to see the landlady, but all I learnt from her was, that they had paid for

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the term agreed on, and had not left any tidings of their new abode.

Except having discovered Fossard's old lodging, I was no forwarder than at first; but I would not abandon the quest without exhausting every chance and inquiry that would suggest itself. Usually the porters of the various districts knew each other; and I interrogated those of the Rue du Petit Carreau, to whom I introduced myself as a wronged husband; and one of them pointed out to me a comrade who had aided in the removal of my rival's goods and chattels.

I saw this individual, and told him my concerted story; but he was a cunning chap, and intended to trick me. I pretended not to perceive it; and, as a recompense for promising that he would conduct me the next day to the place where Fossard had pitched his tent, I gave him two five-franc pieces, which were spent the same day at the Courtille, in company with the lady he "protected."

This interview was on the 27th of December, and we were to meet again the next day; and to fulfil my assertion of the 1st of January there was not much time to lose. I was punctual at the rendezvous; and the porter, whom I had caused to be watched by some agents, was also to the time and place. Some more five-franc pieces changed masters from my purse to his, and I paid for his breakfast. We then started and we arrived at a very pretty house, at the corner of the Rue Duphot and that of Saint Honoré. "Now," said he, "we must ask the vintner just by if they are still here." He wanted me to regale him again. I did not refuse; and we entered the shop, where we emptied a bottle of good wine: I then left him, fully assured of the residence of my pretended wife and her seducer. I had no further occasion for my guide, and dismissed him with a mark of my gratitude; but to be sure that he did not betray me, in the hope of being doubly paid, I ordered the agents

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to watch him closely, and to prevent his returning to the vintner's. As well as I remember, to preclude all possibility of his so doing, they put him in the guard-house: in such cases we are not over particular; and, to be sincere, it was I who put him in the stone doublet, which was but a just retaliation. "My friend," I said to him, "I have left with the police a note of five hundred francs, destined to reward the man who shall successfully aid me in recovering my wife. It is now yours; and I will give you a note which will enable you to secure it;" and I gave him a small note to M. Henry, who, on perusal, said to a police-officer, "Conduct this gentleman to the chest." The chest was, in this instance, the Sylvestre-Chamber (a place of confinement), where my friend, the porter, had a little leisure for salutary reflection.

I was not certain of Fossard's residence, but yet relied on the indications given to me, and I was provided with the necessary power for his apprehension. Then the "richard du Marais" (the rich old man of the Marais) was suddenly metamorphosed into a coalman; and in this costume, under which neither the mother who bore me, nor any of the agents of the police, who saw me daily, could have recognised me, I employed myself in studying the ground on which I should so shortly be compelled to manœuvre.

The friends of Fossard—that is, his denouncers—had advised that the agents employed in his apprehension should be warned that he was always provided with a dagger and pistols, one of which latter, with double barrels, was concealed in a cambric handkerchief which he always held in his hand. This information called for precaution; and, besides, from the known desperation of Fossard's character, it was certain that to avoid a confinement worse than death, he would not hesitate about a murder. I felt no anxiety to become his victim; and thought that it would sensibly diminish my chance of peril, if I came to a previous understanding with the vintner whose tenant Fossard

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was. The vinter was a good fellow enough,* but the police is always in such ill odour, that it is no easy matter to procure the assistance of honest men. I determined to bring him over to my side, by making it much to his interest to do so. I had visited his house several times in my double disguise, and had leisure to make myself acquainted with all the localities, as well as with the sort of visitors who came there. I then went in my usual dress, and accosting the man, told him I wished to speak with him in private. He took me into a small room, when I thus addressed im:—

"I have to inform you, from the police, that a plan is formed to rob your house; the thief who has devised the means, and who probably intends perpetrating the robbery himself, lodges in your house; the female who lives with him comes sometimes behind your counter, sees your wife, and whilst conversing with her, has contrived to get the impression of the key which opens the door by which the proposed entry is to be made. All is arranged; the alarum is to be cut with nippers whilst the door is a-jar; once inside, they will ascend quickly to your chamber; and if they have any suspicion that you are awake, as it is a perfect ruffian who concerts the project, there is no need for me to tell you what will ensue——" "They will cut our throats," said the alarmed vintner, and then called his wife to communicate the intelligence.—"Oh, my love, what a world we live in—trust nobody! That madame Hazard who seemed too good to have a sin to confess—would you believe it—actually contemplates the cutting of our throats! This very night they will come and settle the business."—"No, no, be quiet," I replied, "not this night; the till is not full enough, they wait until the fitting time; but if you are discreet and will second me, we will defeat them."

* He now lives at the Rue Neuve-de-Seine. It was at his door that "La belle Ecaillère" was assassinated.

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Madame Hazard was mademoiselle Tonneau, who had assumed the name by which Fossard was known in the house; and I desired the vintner and his wife, who were gladly led by me, to treat their lodgers as usual. It need not be asked how willingly they followed my instructions; and it was agreed between us that to see Fossard go out, and to be able to decide on the best time to seize on him, I should ensconce myself in a small closet under the stairs.

At an early hour on the 29th of December, I betook myself to my station; it was desperately cold, the watch was a protracted one, and the more painful as we had no fire; motionless, however, and my eye fixed against a small hole in the shutter, I kept my post. At last about three o'clock, he went out; I followed, gladly, and recognised him; for up to that period I had my doubts. Certain now of his identity, I wished at that moment to put into execution the order for his apprehension; but the officer who was with me said he saw the terrible pistol. That I might authenticate the fact, I walked quickly and passed Fossard; and then returning, saw clearly that the agent was right. To attempt to arrest him would have been useless, and I resolved to defer it; and on recalling to mind that a fortnight before I had flattered myself with the prospect of apprehending Fossard on the 1st of January, I was not displeased at the delay; but till then my vigilance was not to be relaxed for a single instant.

On the 31st of December, at eleven o'clock, when all my batteries were charged and my plans perfect, Fossard returned, and without distrust ascended the staircase shaking with cold; and twenty minutes after, the disappearance of the light indicated that he was in bed. The moment had now arrived. The commissary and gendarmes, summoned by me, were waiting at the nearest guard-house until I should call them, and then enter quietly; we deliberated on the most effectual mode of seizing Fossard without running the risk of being killed or wounded; for they were persuaded that

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unless surprised this robber would defend himself desperately.

My first thought was to do nothing till daybreak, as I had been told that Fossard's companion went down very early to get the milk; we should then seize her, and after having taken the key from her, we should enter the room of her lover; but might it not happen, that, contrary to his usual custom, he might go out first? This reflection led me to adopt another expedient.

The vintner's wife, in whose favour, as I was told, M. Hazard was much prepossessed, had one of her nephews at her house, a lad about ten years of age, intelligent beyond his years, and the more desirous of getting money as he was a Norman. I promised him a reward on condition that, under pretence of his aunt's being taken suddenly ill, he should go and beg madame Hazard to give him some Eau de Cologne. I desired the little chap to assume the most piteous tone he could; and was so well satisfied with a specimen he gave me, that I began to distribute the parts to my performers. The dénouement was near at hand. I made all my party take off their shoes, doing the same myself, that we might not be heard whilst going up stairs. The little snivelling pilot was in his shirt; he rang the bell—no one answered; again he rang:—"Who's there?" was heard.—"It is I, madame Hazard; it is Louis: my poor aunt is very bad, and begs you will be so very obliging as to give her a little Eau de Cologne—Oh! she is dying!—I have got a light."

The door was opened; and scarcely had mademoiselle Tonneau presented herself, when two powerful gendarmes seized on her, and fastened a napkin over her mouth to prevent her crying out. At the same instant, with more rapidity than the lion's when darting on his prey, I threw myself upon Fossard; who, stupified by what was doing, and already fast bound and confined in his bed, was my prisoner before he could make a single movement, or utter a single word. So great was his amazement, that it was nearly an hour before he could

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articulate even a few words. When a light was brought and he saw my black face, and garb of a coalman, he experienced such an increase of terror, that I really believe he imagined himself in the devil's clutches. On coming to himself, he thought of his arms, his pistols and dagger, which were upon the table; and turning his eyes towards them, he made a struggle, but that was all; for reduced to the impossibility of doing any mischief, he was passive, and contented himself with "chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy."

On searching the domicile of this formidable brigand, a great quantity of jewels were found; diamonds and cash to the amount of eight or ten thousand francs. Fossard having recovered his spirits, told me that under the marble of the chimney-piece were ten notes of a thousand francs each. "Take them," said he; "we will divide, or you shall take as much as you please." I took the notes, and getting into a fiacre, we soon reached M. Henry's office, where we deposited the booty found in Fossard's apartment. On making out the inventory, when we came to the last item, the commissary, who had accompanied me in the enterprise, said, "It now only remains to conclude the procès-verbal."—"Stay one moment," I cried, "here are ten thousand francs which the prisoner has handed over to me." I displayed this sum, to the great regret of Fossard, who gave me one of those looks which would say, "this is a turn I will never forgive."

Fossard entered early on a career of crime. Born of reputable parents, he had received a good education; his friends had done all in their power to divert him from his vicious courses, but in spite of good advice, he had thrown himself headlong into the vortex of bad company. He began by stealing trifling articles; but soon after, having acquired a decided taste for such pursuits, and blushing, no doubt, at being confounded with ordinary robbers, "petty larceny knaves," he adopted what the gentlemen style a "distinguished line." The famous Victor Desbois and Noel with the

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Spectacles, who now honour the bagne at Brest with their distinguished presence, were his associates; and they committed together those robberies which led to their imprisonment for life. Noel, whose talents as a musician, and in his quality of teacher of the piano-forte, got access to all the rich houses, took impressions of the keys which Fossard then fabricated. It was an art in which he defied Georget and all the locksmiths in the world to surpass him; however complicated the lock, however ingenious and difficult the secret, nothing resisted the efforts of his skill.

It may be easily conceived what advantage he made of such a pernicious talent; being, moreover, a man who could insinuate himself into the company of honest persons, and then dupe them. Besides, he was a close and frigid character, to which he added courage and perseverance. His comrades regarded him as the prince of thieves; and in fact amongst the "tip top cracksmen" (grinches de la haute pegre,) that is, in the aristocracy of robbers, I never knew but Cognard, Pontis, Comte de St Hélène, and Jossas (mentioned in the first volume of these Memoirs,) who were at all comparable with him.

After I had reinstated him at the bagne, Fossard often attempted to escape. Some liberated prisoners who have lately seen him, have assured me that he only longs for liberty, that he may avenge himself on me, They say he has threatened to kill me. If the accomplishment of this kind intention depended solely on him, I am sure he would keep his word, if it were only to give a proof of his intrepidity. Two circumstances that have been told me, will give some idea of the man.

One day Fossard was about to commit a robbery in an apartment on the second story: his comrades, who were watching without, were stupid enough to allow the proprietor to ascend the staircase; and he, on putting the key into the door, opened it, went through several rooms, and on getting to an inner closet, saw the thief at work; but Fossard, putting himself on the

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defensive, escaped. A window was open near him, and, darting out of it, he fell into the street without injury, and disappeared as swift as lightning.

Another time, whilst he was escaping, he was surprised on the tiles of Bicêtre, and fired at. Fossard, never disconcerted, continued to walk along without stopping or hastening his steps, and getting to that side which looks into the fields, he slid down. The fall was enough to have broken a hundred necks, but he received no hurt; only the slide was so rapid, that his clothes were rent in shreds.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

A general clearance at la Courtille—The white cross—I am called a spy—The popular opinion concerning my agents—Summary of the results of the Brigade de Sûreté—Biography of Coco-Lacour, M. Delavau, and the Trou-Madame—The grant of my pardon—Retrospective glance over these Memoirs—I can speak, I will speak.

At the period of Fossard's arrest, the brigade of security was already formed; and, since 1812, when it was first established, I had ceased to be a secret agent The name of Vidocq had become popular, and many persons identified me as the person thus known. The first expedition which had introduced me to notice, had been directed against the principal places of rendezvous in la Courtille. One day, M. Henry having expressed an intention of making a general search at Denoyez's house, that is, a pot-house the most frequented by riotous persons and rogues of every denomination, M. Yvrier, one of the police-officers present, observed, that to put this measure in execution, nothing less than a battalion was necessary. "A battalion," I cried out, instantly; "why not the great army! As for me," I added, "give me eight men, and I will answer for success." We have already had a specimen of the acerbity of M. Yvrier's temper, and, on this occasion, his face actually blazed with rage, and he asserted that it was all empty talk.

Be that as it might, I maintained my proposition, and received my orders to proceed at once to the enterprise. The crusade which I was about to enter upon, was directed against thieves, fugitives, and many deserters from the colonial regiments. Having provided myself with an ample supply of manacles, I set forth with two auxiliaries and eight gendarmes; and, on reaching Denoyez's, I entered the public room, followed by two of my attendants. I commanded the

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musicians to be silent, and they obeyed me; but instantly a cry arose, which soon became general—"To the door, to the door." There was no time to hesitate, and it was necessary to repress the most forward of the party before they became so violent as to proceed to blows. I immediately produced my authority, and, in the name of the law, ordered every one, females excepted, to leave the room. Some murmurs were heard at this injunction, but after a few minutes, the most riotous surrendered and began to depart. I then stationed myself in the passage, and, as I recognised one or more of the individuals whom I sought, I marked a cross on their backs with white chalk, which was a preconcerted signal, to point out to the gendarmes, who were in attendance without, to seize them and fetter them as they went out. In this manner we secured thirty-two of these noted offenders, of whom we formed a string, which was conducted to the nearest guard-house, and thence to the prefecture of police.

The boldness of this coup-de-main made much noise amongst the persons who frequent the barrier; and, in a short time, it was reported amongst all the thieves and blackguards of Paris, that there was a spy amongst them called Vidocq. The most notorious threatened to "do for me" on the first opportunity, and some of them attempted it, but were defeated most wofully; and the repulses they met with begot for me such an extensive renown, that it was at length equally spread over all the individuals of my brigade; and there was not a stripling amongst them who had not the reputation of Alcides himself; and, to such a pitch was this idea carried, that, forgetting occasionally of whom they were discoursing, I experienced a sentiment almost amounting to fear, when the people, without knowing who I was, conversed, in my presence, of me or my agents. We were colossal in stature, and the "old man of the mountain" was not more terrible; his emissaries, the Seids, were not more devoted or more to

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be dreaded. We broke legs and arms unsparingly; nothing resisted us; and we were everywhere. I was invulnerable; and some asserted that I was enveloped in armour from head to foot; which may be said, perhaps, to be true, when one is not reputed a coward.

The formation of the brigade soon followed the expedition of la Courtille. I had at first four agents, then six, afterwards ten, and finally twelve. In 1817, I had no more; and yet, with this handful of men, from the 1st of January to the 31st of December, I effected 772 arrests and 39 perquisitions or seizures of stolen property.

The following table, which is a recapitulation of the arrests during the year 1817, shows the importance of the operations of the "Brigade de Sûreté"—

Assassins or murderers	15
Robbers or burglars	5
Ditto with false keys, &c.	108
Ditto in furnished houses	12
Highwaymen	126
Pickpockets and cut-purses	73
Shoplifters	17
Receivers of stolen property	38
Fugitives from the prisons	14
Tried galley slaves having left their exile	43
Forgers, cheats, swindlers, &c.	46
Vagabonds, robbers returned to Paris	229
By mandates from his excellency	46
Captures and seizures of stolen property	39
Total	811

From the moment that the robbers knew that I was to exercise the functions of principal police agent, they gave themselves up for lost; and what most disturbed them was to see me surrounded by men, who, having lived and "worked" with them, knew them thoroughly.

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The captures I made in 1813 were not so numerous as in 1817, but quite sufficient to increase their alarm. In 1814 and 1815, a gang of Parisian robbers, freed from the English prison ships, returned to the capital, where they were not slow in resuming their former avocations: they had none of them ever seen me, nor had I seen them; and flattering themselves with the hope of eluding my vigilance, they commenced their campaign with surprising activity and audacity. In one single night there were in the faubourg St. Germain, ten robberies by forcible entry; during more than six weeks nothing was talked of but such hardy exploits as these. M. Henry, despairing of any mode of repressing this system of robbery, was constantly on the watch; and I could discover nothing. At length, after many ambuscades and much vigilance, an experienced thief, whom I apprehended, gave me some information; and in less than two months I placed in the grasp of justice a band of twenty-two thieves, one of twenty-eight, a third of eighteen, and some others of twelve, ten, or eight; not to say anything of the single ones, and the many "fences" (receivers), who were all forwarded to increase the population of the bagnes. It was at this period that I was authorized to augment my brigade with four new agents, chosen from amongst those thieves who had the advantage of knowing the new importation of robbers before their departure.

Three of these veterans, named Goreau, Florentin, and Coco-Lacour, who had been long confined at Bicêtre, earnestly prayed to be employed; they said they were entirely reformed, and swore they would henceforward live honestly by the produce of their labours, that is, upon the salary allotted to the police officers. They had been steeped in crime from infancy; and I thought that if their determinations of reformation were sincere, none could render me more important services than themselves, and I thereupon applied for their pardon; and although I was told of the chance of

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their return to evil courses, particularly the two last, yet by dint of solicitations and representations founded on the utility they could be to me, I obtained their freedom. Coco-Lacour, against whom the greatest prejudice existed, because, when a secret agent, he had been accused (rightly or wrongfully is a question) of stealing the plate of the inspector-general Veyrat, is the only one who has given me no cause to repent of having in some degree become answerable for his conduct. The two others soon compelled me to expel them, and they have since been condemned at Bourdeaux. As for Coco, I thought he would keep his word, and I was not deceived. As he was very intelligent, and had some knowledge of his business, I made him my secretary. Subsequently, in consequence of some remonstrances I made him, he gave me in his resignation, as did two of his comrades, Decostard, called Procureur, and another named Chrétien. Coco-Lacour is now the chief police agent; and until he publishes his Memoirs it may not be uninteresting to show the vicissitudes through which he has passed in attaining the post which I so long filled. There are many palliatives for his course of life; and in his radical reformation from capital crimes, are shown potent reasons why we should never despair of the return of a man of perverted courses of life to the paths of rectitude. The documents from which I shall extract the principal features of the history of my successor, are most correctly authentic. Here we have the first traces of his existence left at the prefecture of police. I open the "Registres de sûreté," and thus transcribe:—

"Lacour, Marie-Barthelemy, aged eleven years, residing Rue du Lycée; sent to La Force 9th Ventose, year 9, charged with an attempt at robbery: eleven days afterwards sentenced to a month's imprisonment by the Correctional Tribunal.

"The same, apprehended 2nd Prairial following, and again sent to La Force accused of stealing lace in a

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shop. Set at liberty the same day by the judicial police magistrate of the 2nd arrondissement (division).

"The same, sent to Bicêtre 23d Thermidor, year 10, by order of M. le préfet; discharged 28th Pluviose, year 11.

"The same, sent to Bicêtre 6th Germinal, year 11, by order of the préfet; remanded to the gendarmerie 2nd Floréal following, to be conveyed to Havre.

"The same, aged 17; a notorious pickpocket, and already frequently in custody as such; sent to Bicêtre in July, 1807, to serve (voluntarily) in the colonial corps, and remanded 31st of the same month to the gendarmerie, to be conveyed to the fixed destination. Escaped from the Isle of Rhé the same year.

"The same Lacour called Coco (Barthelemy), or Louis Barthelemy, aged 21; born at Paris, a porter, living faubourg St. Antoine, No. 297. Sent to La Force 1st December, 1809, accused of theft. Sentenced to two years' imprisonment by the Correctional Tribunal on the 18th of January, 1810, and then handed over to the minister of the marine department as a deserter.

"The same, sent to the Bicêtre 22nd January, 1812, as an incorrigible thief. Sent to the prefecture 3d of July, 1816."

The youth of Lacour presents a sad picture of the dangers of a bad education. All I can say is, that since his liberation he has shown every symptom of an excellent natural disposition. Unfortunately, his parents were poor; his father, a tailor and porter in the Rue du Lycée, did not bestow any thought or care on the guidance of his early years, on which so frequently depends the destiny of most men. I believe, besides, that he was left an orphan at a very tender age; but certainly he grew up, nursed on the knees of his neighbours the courtezans and milliners of the "Palais Egalité;" and as they found him a nice little fellow, they were prodigal of their favours and caresses; they, at the same time, instilled into him what they termed "acuteness." Those were the ladies who took care of

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his infancy, and with whom he was constantly to be found. He was "the ladies' toy, the charming boy;" and when the duties of their calling took them away from a leisure of so much innocence, little Coco went into the garden, and played with the throng of blackguards, who, between the games of hockey and peg-top, kept a school of initiation into the mysteries of sleight of hand. Nourished by prostitutes and taught by pickpockets, there is no need to descant at length on the "trade" in which he acquired an early proficiency. The road he travelled was a dangerous one. One female, who perhaps thought herself entitled to give a better direction to his "studies," invited him to her house; her name was Marechal, who kept a notorious house in the Place des Italiennes. There Coco was well nurtured; but complaisance was the only moral quality which his hostess sought to develope, and very complaisant he became: he was at everybody's beck and call, and made himself subservient to the minutest wants of the establishment, whose every detail was perfectly familiar to him. However young, Lacour had his days and hours for walking abroad, and it appears that he did not pass them idly; for before he attained his twelfth year, he was quoted as one of the greatest adepts at stealing lace, and in a very little time his frequent arrests would have procured for him the first rank amongst the shoplifters, called knights of the post (chevaliers grimpants). Four or five years detention at Bicêtre, where he was confined as a dangerous and incorrigible thief, did not amend him; but there he learned the trade of a cap-maker, and received other instruction.

Insinuating, plastic, with a soft voice, and a face effeminate but not handsome, he took the fancy of a M. Mulner, who, sentenced to sixteen years of hard labour, had obtained permission to await the expiration of his sentence at Bicêtre. This prisoner, who was brother to a banker at Anvers, was a man of good education; and to divert his thoughts, took Coco

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under his care, and must have aided his studies with much attention, as in a short time Coco could speak and write his own language in a tolerably correct manner. The good graces of M. Mulner were not the only advantage which Lacour derived from an agreeable exterior. During the whole of his imprisonment, a female, called Elisa l'Allemande, (German Eliza) who was enamoured of him, bestowed all possible favours on him; but this girl, to whom he owes life itself, has, according to report, experienced only ingratitude from him in return.

Lacour is a man whose height does not exceed five feet two inches;* he is fair and bald-headed, with a mean, nay, almost servile look; his eyes blue, but dull; a care-worn countenance, and nose slightly rubicund at the tip, which is the sole part of his face that is not as pale as a corpse. He is passionately fond of dress and trinkets, and makes a great show of chains and gewgaws of all sorts: in his conversation he affects great refinement, and makes use of fine words upon every occasion. It is impossible to be more polite, nor more humble; but at the first glance it is perceptible that his manners are not those of well-bred society; they are rather those derived from the genteel part of the inmates of prisons, and those places which Lacour has frequented. He has all the suppleness of loins needful to keep a man in place; and moreover has a wonderful aptitude for genuflexion. Tartuffe himself, and the resemblance is striking in more than one particular, could not acquit himself more satisfactorily.

Lacour having become my secretary, could not be made to understand, that, to preserve the decorum of his post, his lady companion, who had turned fruiteress and washerwoman, after giving up a certain other em ployment, would do well to choose a business somewhat more respectable. A discussion on this subject

* Nearly 5 feet 8 inches English measure.

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occurred between us, and rather than yield the point, he resigned his situation. He became a pedlar, and sold pocket-handkerchiefs in the streets; but soon, as fame reports, he became a church-goer, and enrolled himself beneath the banner of the Jesuits, and thence grew into the "odour of sanctity" with MM. Duplessis and Delavau. Lacour has all the devotion which could recommend him in their eyes. One fact I can testify, that at the period of his marriage, his confessor, who deemed a heavy penance necessary, inflicted one upon him of a most rigorous nature, which he endured to the fullest extent. For a month, rising at dawn of day, he went with bare feet to the Rue Sainte-Anne au Calvaire, the only place where he was to meet his wife, who was also expiating offences committed.

After the appointment of M. Delavau, Lacour had an accession of religious fervour; he lived then in Rue Zacharie, and although his parochial church was that of Saint Severin, yet he went to mass every Sunday at Notre-Dame, where chance (of course) always placed him in front of the new préfet and his family. That Lacour was so thoroughly reformed must be a matter of congratulation; but it is to be lamented that it did not commence twenty years earlier; but better late than never.

Lacour has very mild manners, and if he did not get dead drunk occasionally, we should think that he had no other passion than a great love of fishing. He throws his line in the vicinity of the Pont Neuf, and frequently devotes whole hours to this silent enjoyment. Constantly near him is a female, who gives him from time to time the worm with which to bait his hook; it is madame Lacour, formerly celebrated for offering other baits still more captivating. Lacour was enjoying this innocent recreation, the taste for which he partakes with his "Britannic majesty," and the poet Coupigny, when honours came in quest of him. The messengers of M. Delavau found him under the Arche-Marion, and took him, line in hand, as the

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officers of the Roman senate took Cincinnatus from his plough. There are always in the lives of great men, deeds of similarity, and perhaps madame Cincinnatus also sold dresses for the accommodation of the young ladies of her time. This is now the trade of the legitimate better moiety of Coco-Lacour. But "something too much of this." I have said enough about my successor, and now to return to the history of the "Brigade de Sûreté."

It was in the course of the years 1823 and 1824 that it received its greatest increase of numbers, the amount of agents of which it was then composed being, on the proposition of M. Parisot, extended to twenty, and even twenty-eight, including eight individuals supported by the profits of gambling tables, which the préfet authorized them to keep in the public streets.

When millions (francs) were allowed for the expenses of the police, it is scarcely conceivable how recourse can be had to such pitiful measures. From the 20th of July to the 4th of August, the gambling-tables held under the authority of M. Delavau produced 4,364 francs, 20 cents. This was the money of mechanics and apprentices, who were thus inoculated with a lust for the most destructive of all passions. It will scarcely be believed, that a functionary, a magistrate professedly so religious, could lend himself to such immorality; but the perusal of the following document will remove all doubts:—

"PREFECTURE OF POLICE.

"Paris, 13 Jan. 1823.

"We, councillor of state, préfet of police, &c. ordain as follows:—

"To include from this date, the Sieurs Drissenn and Ripaud, formerly authorized to keep in the public streets a gaming-table of 'trou madame,' in the par-

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ticular 'Brigade de Sûreté,' under the orders of Sieur Vidocq, chief of this brigade.

"They shall continue to keep the gambling-table, but six other persons shall be added to their numbers, who shall also perform the services of secret agents.

"The councillor of state, préfet, &c.

(Signed) "G. DELAVAU.

"Copied by the secrétaire-général.

"L. DEFOUNGERES."

It was with a troop so small as this that I had to watch over more than twelve hundred pardoned convicts, freed, some from public prisons, others from solitary confinement: to put in execution, annually, from four to five hundred warrants, as well from the préfet as the judicial authorities; to procure information, to undertake searches, and obtain particulars of every description; to make nightly rounds, so perpetual and arduous during the winter season; to assist the commissaries of police in their searches, or in the execution of search-warrants; to explore the various rendezvous in every part; to go to the theatres, the boulevards, the barriers, and all other public places, the haunts of thieves and pickpockets. What activity must be exercised when only twenty-eight men were appointed for such details on so vast a space, and at so many points at once! My agents had almost the talent of ubiquity, and I, to keep alive the spirit of emulation and zeal amongst them, incited them by unremitting exertions. In no expedition, however perilous, did I spare myself; and if the most notorious criminals have been brought to justice by my vigilance, I may say, without boasting, that the most daring were the capture of my own hands, the prize of my bow and spear. As principal agent of "La police particulière de sûreté," I might, as chief, have kept quiet at my office in Rue Sainte-Anne: but more actively, and moreover, more usefully employed, I only went there

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to give my orders for the day, to receive reports, or to give audiences to persons who, having been robbed, came to me with their complaints, trusting to have the thieves detected.

Up to the moment of my quitting office, the police of safety—the only requisite police, that which should have received the greater portion of the funds allowed by the budget, because it is on it principally that reliance has been placed—the police of safety, I say, has never employed more than thirty men, nor cost more than 50,000 francs per annum, from which five were allotted to me.

Such have been, at the utmost, the effective force and the expense of the Brigade de Sûreté: with so small a number of auxiliaries, and means so limited, I have maintained security in the bosom of a capital, populated by nearly a million of inhabitants. I have broken up all the associations of malefactors; I have prevented their re-union; and during the year since I have left the police, if no new gangs have been formed, although robberies have increased, it is because all the "first-rate professors" have been confined at the bagnes, when I had the commission to pursue them, and the power to repress them.

Before my time, strangers and country people looked on Paris as a den of infamy, where it was requisite to keep incessantly on the alert; and where all comers, however guarded and careful, were sure to pay their footing. Since my time, there was no department, taking the year round, in which more crimes, and more horrible crimes, were perpetrated than in the department of the Seine; now there is none in which fewer guilty offenders have remained unknown, or fewer crimes remained unpunished. In truth, since 1814, the continued vigilance of the national guard has powerfully contributed to such results. Never was the watchfulness of a national guard more requisite, and more efficient: but still it must be allowed that, at the period when the com-

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pulsory enlistment of our troops, and the desertion of foreign soldiers, poured out upon our metropolis a crowd of bad characters, adventurers, and needy persons of all nations, in spite of the presence of the national guard, much work was still to be performed by the brigade of safety and their chief. And we did much; and if I feel pleasure in paying to the national guard the well-earned tribute of their merits,—if from the experience I had during their existence, and since their disbanding, I declare that Paris without them cannot be in safety, it is because I have always found in them an intelligence, an anxiety to assist, a perfect desire to act in concert for the public good, which I have never observed in the gendarmes, who manifest their zeal for the most part by acts of brutality, after the actual danger has passed. I have left for the present police of safety an infinity of precedents, and the traditions of my enterprises will not soon be forgotten; but whatever may be the abilities of my successor, as long as Paris shall be destitute of its civil guard, no measures will reduce to a state of inaction the generation of malefactors, which will spring up from the instant that a watch ceases to be kept, at all hours, and in all quarters. The chief of the police cannot be at all points at once, and each of his agents has not the hundred arms of Briareus. On looking over the columns of the daily journals, we are alarmed at the enormous quantity of violent burglaries nightly committed, and yet the journals do not detail nine-tenths of those that occur. It appears that a gang of galley-slaves has recently established itself on the banks of the Seine. The shopkeepers, even in the most frequented and most populous streets, cannot sleep in safety: the Parisian is afraid to leave his apartments for a short excursion into the country: we hear of nothing but breakings in, doors opened with false keys, apartments plundered, &c.; and yet we are in the season of the year most favourable for the lower orders.

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What must we then expect, when winter comes on, and when, by the interruption of labour, misery will add to her numbers? For, in spite of the assertions of some persons about the king, who are desirous of remaining in ignorance of all that passes around them, misery will engender crime; and misery in a society which is ill combined, is not a scourge from which we can always shield ourselves, even when indefatigably industrious. The moralists of a time when the population was secure, might have been able to assert, that the idle only are liable to die of hunger; but now all is changed, and if we make observations, we shall soon be convinced, not only that there is not employment sufficient for everybody, but, moreover, that the pay for certain labour is not sufficient to satisfy the first demands of nature. If circumstances occur as severe as many anticipate, when trade is languishing, so that industry is exerted vainly in seeking a market for its productions, and that she is impoverished in proportion as she creates, how can so great an evil be remedied? Certainly, it is better to support the necessitous than to think of repressing their despair; but in the impossibility of doing better, and the crisis so near at hand, is it not advisable, in the first instance, to strengthen the arms of public order? And what guard is preferable to the continual presence of the civic body, who watch and act perpetually under the auspices of legality and honour? Shall we substitute for an institution so noble, so admirable, a changeable police, whose numbers can be extended or curtailed at pleasure? Or, shall we have a legion of agents, who will be discharged the moment they are thought past service? It is generally known that the police of safety is recruited even at the present time from the prisons and bagnes, which are a sort of preparatory school for spies on robbers, and the nursery whence they must be drawn. Employ these people in numbers, and seek to send them back again when they have acquired the knowledge of the plans of

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the police; they will return to their old trade, and with additional prospect of success. All trials when I have made them with my auxiliaries, have proved to me the truth of such an assertion. Not but that some of the members of my brigade (and it was entirely composed of individuals who had undergone sentences of punishment) were incapable of doing an action contrary to honesty; I could quote the names of many to whom I should not have hesitated to confide money to any amount without an acknowledgment for it—without even counting it; but those who were thus thoroughly reformed were in the distinguished minority: and this would not bear out an assertion, (with all respect for the profession) that there were amongst them fewer honest men in proportion than are to be found in the other classes to which it is deemed honourable to belong. I have seen amongst notaries, money-brokers, and bankers, many faithless agents who have seemed to rejoice in the infamy with which they were covered. I have seen one of my subalterns, a freed galley-slave, blow out his brains, because he had lost at the gaming-table five hundred francs, of which he was only the depository. Can many similar suicides be pointed out in the annals of the Exchange? And yet——but it is not our business to apologize here for the brigade of safety, in a point of view totally foreign to its service. It was the inconvenience of large bodies of spies that I proposed to make evident; and inconvenience results from all that I have said, without mentioning its dangerous effect on the morals of the people, who become thereby familiarized with the idea, that every sentence undergone is a noviciate or introduction to a certain mode of existence, and that the police is only the invalid squadron of the galleys.

It is, perhaps, from the period of the formation of the Brigade de Sûreté that the interest of these Memoirs really commences. It may be thought that I have expatiated somewhat too much at large on my

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personal affairs, but it was a necessary preliminary that I should impart a knowledge of the vicissitudes through which I have passed to become the Hercules for whom was reserved the purging the earth of dire monsters, and cleansing out the Augean stable. I did not reach the eminence in a single day, but have furnished a long career of observation and painful experience. Soon, and I have given some trifling specimens of my means to do so, I will detail my labours, the efforts I have made, the perils I have confronted, the plots and stratagems to which I have had recourse, to fulfil the utmost of my duty, and to render Paris the safest residence in the world. I will unfold the expedients resorted to by the thieves, and the signs by which they may be detected; I will write of their manners and their habits; I will explain their language and their costume, according to the peculiarities of each; for thieves have a costume adapted to the enterprises in which they are engaged. I will propose infallible measures for the destruction of all rogueries, and putting a stop to the destructive skill of all those swindlers, cheats, impostors, &c. &c. who, in spite of Sainte Pelagie, and despite the useless and barbarous custom of personal arrest, (contrainte par corps,) daily cheat to the extent of millions (francs). I will lay open all the modes and tactics practised by all these scoundrels to catch their "gudgeons." I will do "all this, ay, more;" I will mention by name the principal of them, and thus brand them in the forehead with a distinguishing mark. I will class the different grades of malefactors, from the murderer to the pickpocket, and form of them lists more useful than those of La Bourdonnaie for the use of the proscribers of 1815; for mine will, at least, have the advantage of pointing out at the first glance the persons and places to whom mistrust should be attached. I will expose to the eyes of the honest man, all the snares laid to catch him; and I will note down, for the use of the criminal accuser,

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the various modes of escape by which the guilty but too often succeed in setting at defiance the sagacity of the judge.

I will display to the glare of noon-day the faults of our criminal informations, and the still greater errors of our penal code, so absurd in many of its enactments. I will ask for alterations, revisions; and what I ask will be conceded: because reason, come from where she may, is always sooner or later understood. I will offer important ameliorations in the regulations of prisons and bagnes; and as I compassionate more deeply than another can, the sufferings of my old companions in misery, condemned or pardoned, I will probe the wound to the bottom; and shall, perhaps, be the happy man who will offer to a philanthropic legislator the only remedies which it is possible to apply, and which alone will be not temporizing but effective. In delineations, as varied as novel, I will give original traits of many classes of society, destitute as yet of all civilization; or rather which have emanated from her, and infest her, attended by all that is hideous and infamous. I will mould with fidelity the physiognomy of these "paria castes;" and I will so contrive, that the necessity of some institutions to purify them, as well as to regulate the manners of a portion of the people, shall result; for having had closer and more frequent opportunities of studying them than any other person, I can give a more exact account of them. I will satisfy curiosity on more heads than one; but that is not the end I aim at. Corruption must be lessened by it, the blemishes on propriety must be more rare, prostitution must cease to be the consequence of certain peculiarities of situation; and those nameless depravities abhorrent, that those who have abandoned themselves to them have been placed out of the pale of the law as a punishment for their outrage on morals, as well as for the protection of the correct portion of society, should disappear, or cease to be, by their infamous publicity, a perpetual object of just offence to the man who obeys and re-

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spects the law of nature. This is the apex of crime; and to root it out, the highest stations of society must be assailed. Persons of exalted rank are tainted with this leprosy, which has lately spread to a dreadful extent. At the sight of venerated names in the list of the modern Sardanapali, we can but shudder at the frailty of humanity; and yet this list makes mention only of those who have been reduced to the necessity of sending for the police, or allowing them to interfere in the disgraceful scenes which they brought on by their own turpitude.

It has been publicly stated that I shall not speak of the political police: I shall speak of all police now existing, from that of the jesuits to that of the court; from the police of the "ladies of the pavé" (bureau des mœurs) to the diplomatic police; (a system of espionage established by the powers of Russia, England, and Austria;) I will show up all the wheel-work, great and small, of those machines which are always set in motion, not for the sake of the general weal, but for the service of him who introduces the drops of oil; that is to say, for the benefit of the first comer who dispenses the cash of the treasury: for when we mention political police, we mention an institution created and maintained by a desire of enriching certain persons at the expense of a government whose alarms it perpetually excites. When we talk of a political police, we talk of the necessity of being inscribed in the budget of secret expenses; —the necessity of giving a concealed destination to funds visibly and often illegally levied; (such as the tax on prostitutes, and a thousand other trifling imposts;) —the necessity for certain administrators to create important wants, asserted to be for state exigencies;—the necessity, in fact, of extortions for the profit of a vile herd of adventurers, intriguers, gamblers, bankrupts, pilferers, &c. Perhaps I shall be fortunate enough to point out the inutility of those perpetual agents destined to prevent attempts which are "few and far between," —crimes which they have never foreseen, plots which

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they have never detected when they were real, or only discovered when they themselves had concocted them. I will develope all these things without disguise, without fear, without temper; I will tell the whole truth, whether I speak as a witness or as an actor.

I have always held political spies in the most profound contempt, and for two reasons: first if they never fulfil their orders, they are rogues; and if they do fulfil them, as soon as it becomes a personal matter, they are wretches. Yet, my functions frequently placed me in contact with the majority of these hireling spies; they were all known to me directly or indirectly, and I shall name them all. I can do it; I have not shared their infamy; I have only seen the mine and countermine somewhat nearer than any other person. I know what are the resources of the polices and counter-polices. I have learnt, and will communicate the means of ensuring their services; how to play them off, to disturb their treacherous and malevolent plottings, and even mystify them. I have observed all, understood all; nothing has escaped me; and those who gave me my cue for hearing and understanding all, were not false brethren; for, as I was at the head of one of the portions of police, they might think I was a bird of their feather. Did we not all grind at the same mill?

I may be believed or not; but so far I have made some confessions so humiliating, as to leave no doubt that if I had belonged to the political police, I should unhesitatingly avow all. The journals, which are not always well-informed, have asserted that they had frequently discovered me in different enterprises; that I and my brigade were in action during the troubles of June; during the missions; at the burial of General Foy; at the anniversary of the death of young Lallemand; at the schools of law and medicine, when certain questions were agitated. It would be easy to assert that I was wherever a multitude assembled; but what would be the fair inference? Why, that I was seeking for

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thieves and pickpockets where they were carrying on their trade. I was on the look out for cut-purses, friends or not of "La Charte;" but I defy any one to say that any one of my agents could be detected in uttering a seditious cry. There is no point of relation between a political spy and a police spy. Their attributes are totally distinct: the one only needs the courage to apprehend an honest man, who rarely makes any resistance. The courage of the other is wholly different, and rogues are not so tractable.

There was a report, which for some time was very prevalent, namely, that, recognised by a water-carrier in the midst of a group of students who would not attend to the lessons of M. the professor Recamier, I was nearly killed by them. I here declare that the statement was utterly unfounded. A spy was certainly pointed out, menaced, and even ill-treated. It was not I, and I confess I was not sorry for it; but had I been amongst the young men who were active in this fray, I should instantly have declared my name: they would soon have known that Vidocq never meddled with respectable young men, who did not carry on business in the "purse and watch line." Had I been amongst them, I would have conducted myself so as not to have drawn down any disagreeables on my head; and it would have been generally understood that my duty did not consist in exciting individuals already too much exasperated. The man who saved himself in a court, and thus escaped their vengeance, was Godin, a peace-officer. Besides, I repeat it, neither the seditious cries, nor the other evidences of opinion, were of consequence to me; and had any one pointed out to me the most seditious of the party, I should not have considered it any part of my duties to have noticed him. The political police is in regular troops, and has always volunteers on grand occasions, paid or unpaid, ready to second its designs. In 1795 the Septembrizers were let loose; they came from under-ground, and returned there again after the mas-

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sacres. The window-smashers, who, in 1817, were the preluders to the carnage of the Rue Saint Denis, were not, I believe, belonging to the "Brigade de Sûreté." I appeal to M. Delavau; I appeal to the director Franchet:—the freed convicts are not the worst inhabitants of Paris; and, in more cases than one, have evinced that they will not stoop to all that is required of them. My post, as far as concerns political police, was limited to the execution of some warrants of the attorney-general and the ministers; but these warrants would have been enforced without me; and, besides, they had decided legal authority. And besides, no human power, no prospect of reward, could have induced me to act conformably to principles and sentiments not my own: and my veracity will not be impugned, when I state the motives that induced me voluntarily to resign the post I had filled for fifteen years;—when I explain the source and the reason of the ridiculous tale, according to which I was to have been hanged at Vienna, for an attempt to assassinate the son of Napoleon;—when I shall have told to what jesuitical plot is to be assigned the false story of the apprehension of a thief, who was stated to have been lately seized at the back of my carriage, at the moment I was passing Place Baudoyer.

In drawing up these Memoirs, I at first limited myself to arrangements and restrictions prescribed by my personal situation, which were prudential. Although pardoned since 1818, I was not out of the reach of administrative rigour: the letter of pardon which I have obtained, instead of a revision which would have freed me, was not drawn out; and it might be that the "powers that be," still bearing the license of absolute control over me, might make me repent these disclosures, which do not, however, exceed the bounds of our constitutional liberty. Now that at the solemn audience of the first of last July, (1828,) the court of Douai proclaimed that the rights which had been taken from me by an error of justice, were at length

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restored to me, I will omit nothing, I will disguise nothing which it is fitting to say; and it shall still be for the service of the state and the public, that I will be indiscreet: this intention will be evident in every subsequent page. That I may perform it in a way which will leave me nothing to desire, and not to deceive the general expectation in any way, I have imposed on myself a task very painful for a man more accustomed to do than to narrate, that of revising the greater part of these Memoirs. They were terminated, and I might have given them as they were; but, in addition to the inadequacy of a careless style, the reader would therein detect the mark of a strange influence which I must have submitted to unwillingly. Distrusting myself, and little accustomed to the requisites of the literary world, I had submitted my work to the revision of a soi-disant man of letters. Unfortunately, in this censor, whose private orders I was far from suspecting, I met with one who, for a bribe, had undertaken to emasculate my manuscript, and only to present me under the most odious colours; to pervert my meaning, and deprive all I wished to say of its due importance. A very severe accident, the fracture of my right arm, which I was on the point of having amputated in consequence, was a favourable occurrence in aid of the perpetration of such a project; and therefore all haste was made to profit by the period of my excessive sufferings. The first volume and part of the second were already printed, when all this intrigue was discovered. To render it perfect, I must have re-commenced, at a fresh expense; but to that time only my private adventures were detailed; and although I am drawn in the most unfavourable colours, I hope that in spite of the expressions and bad arrangement, since the facts are told, the just estimation will be set on them, and the most correct inferences drawn. All that portion of the narrative which only relates to my private life, I have allowed to remain. I had the right to subscribe to a sacrifice of my self-love; a

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sacrifice which I make, at the risk of being taxed with immodesty, for a confession, the motives of which have been dissembled or perverted: it marks the limit between what I ought to preserve and what to destroy. After my enlistment amongst the pirates at Boulogne, it will be perceived easily that it is I who hold the pen. This prose is such as M. Baron Pasquier was pleased to approve, for which he had even a predilection which he did not conceal. I ought to remember the eulogiums he passed on the abridged reports which I addressed to him: be that as it may, I have repaired the injury as far as was in my power, and in spite of the increase of labour which has fallen to my lot in the direction of a large working establishment which I have formed, resolved my Memoirs shall be really "the police stripped and exposed to the public," I have not hesitated to undertake, in addition, the narration of all that relates to the police. The necessity of such a labour must cause some delays, but it will justify them at the same time, and the public will not be the losers. Formerly Vidocq, under sentence of justice, could only speak reservedly; now it is Vidocq, the free citizen, who freely narrates "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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